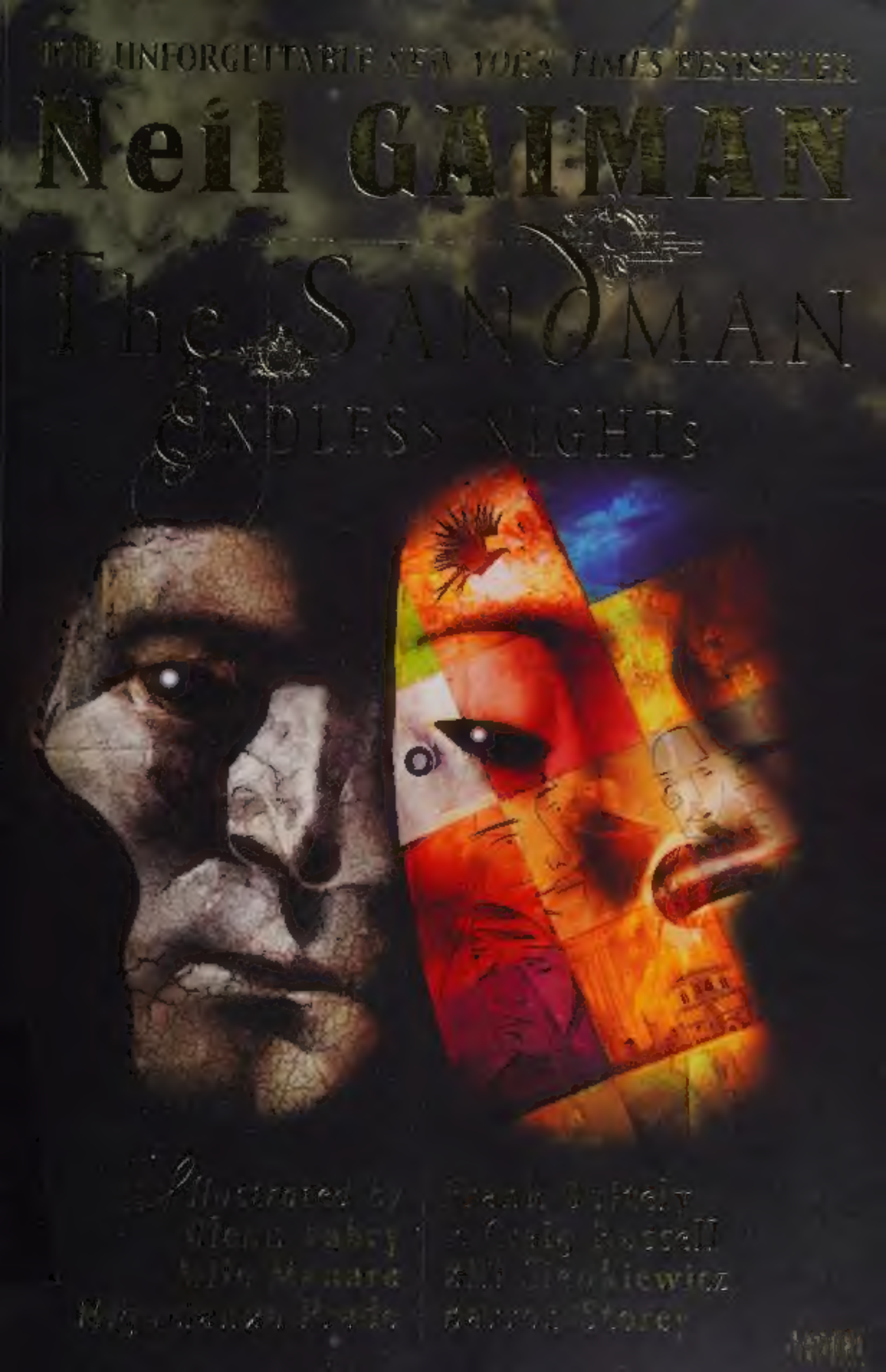
THE UNFORGETTABLE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

Neil GAIMAN

The SANDMAN

SANDES NIGHTS




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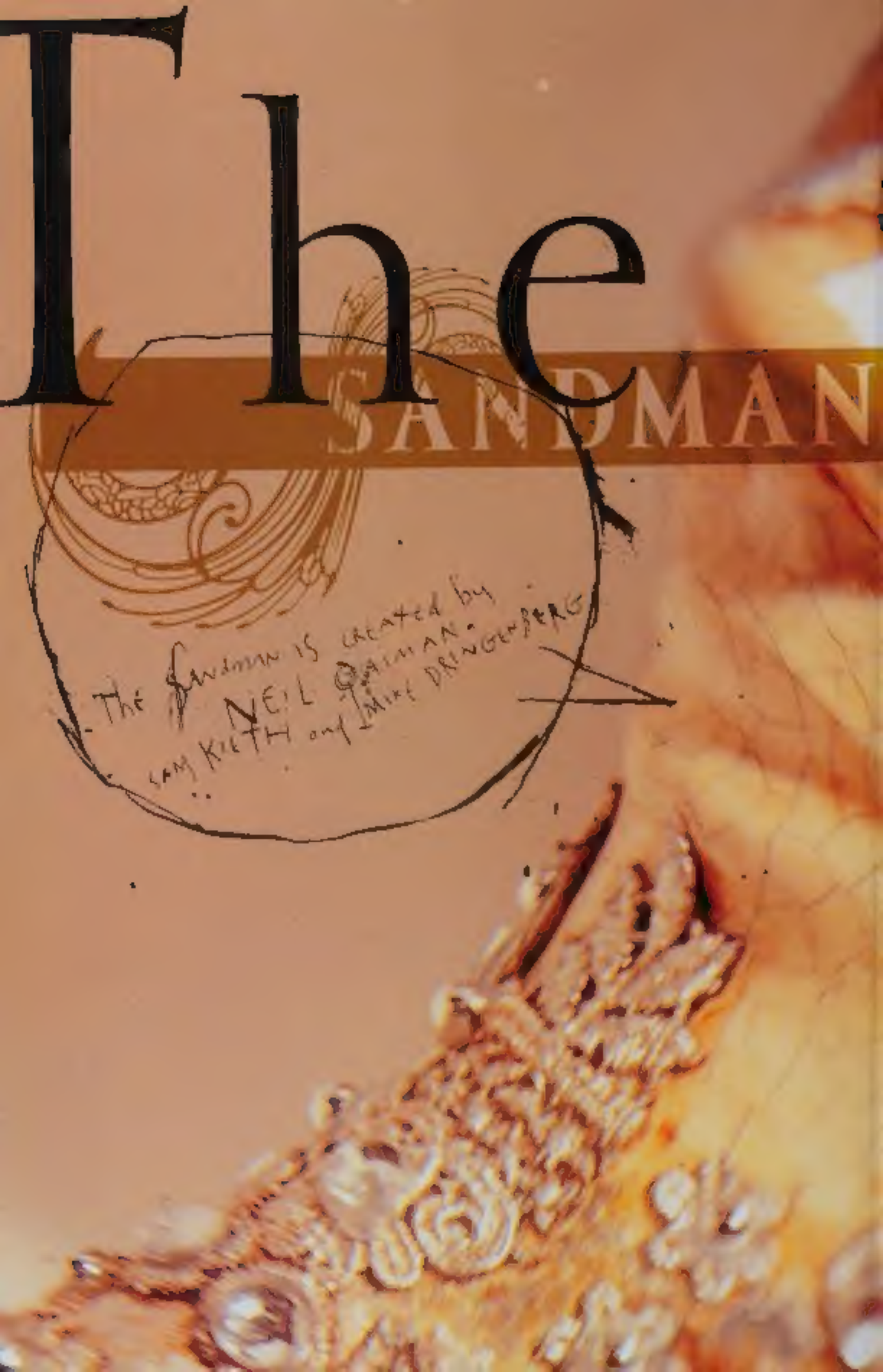
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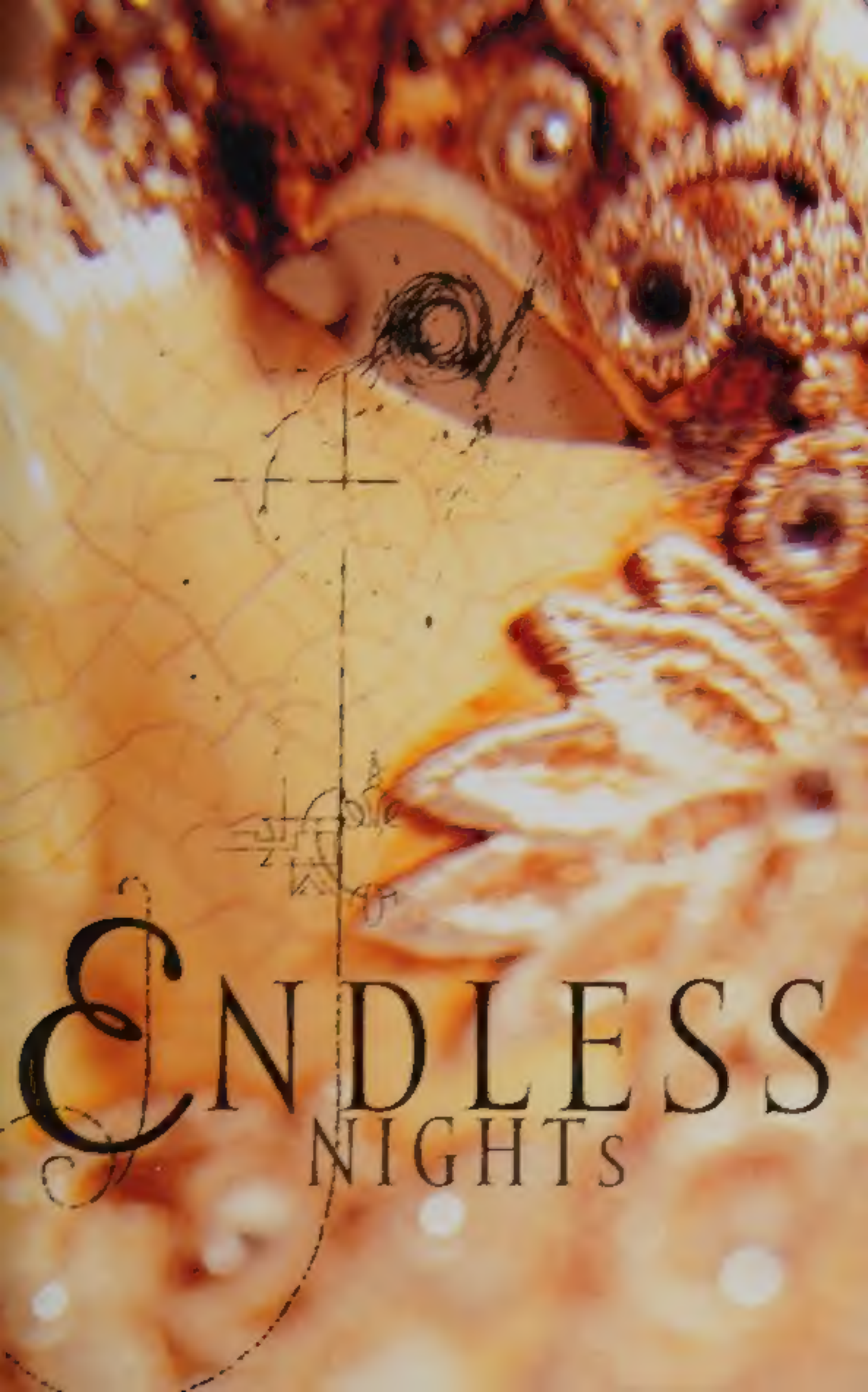


ENDLESS NIGHTS

THE SANDMAN

The SANDMAN


The Sandman is created by
NEIL GAIMAN
SAM KIETH and MIKE DRINGENBERG

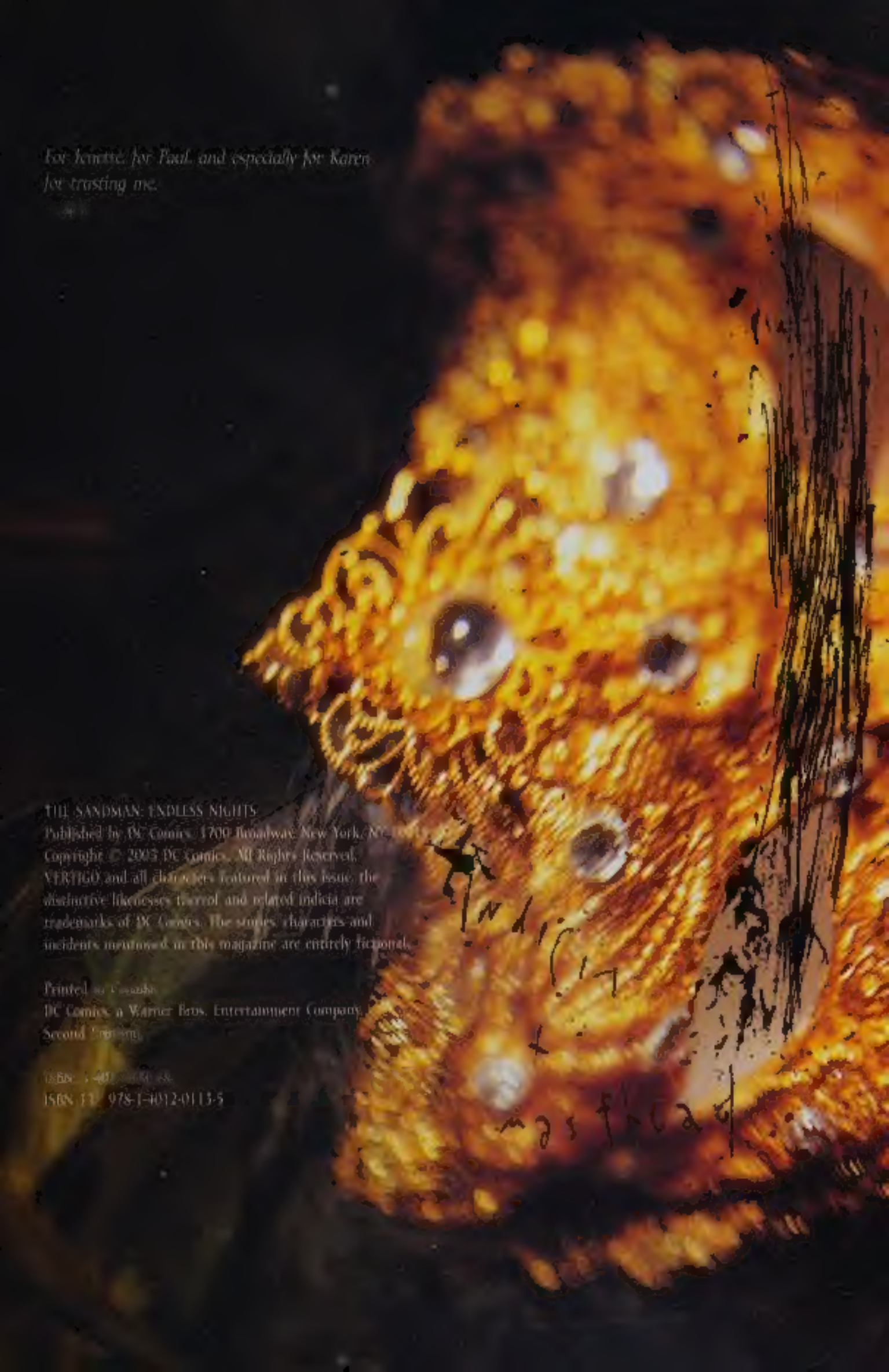

ENDLESS
NIGHTS



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For Jennie, for Paul, and especially for Karen for trusting me.



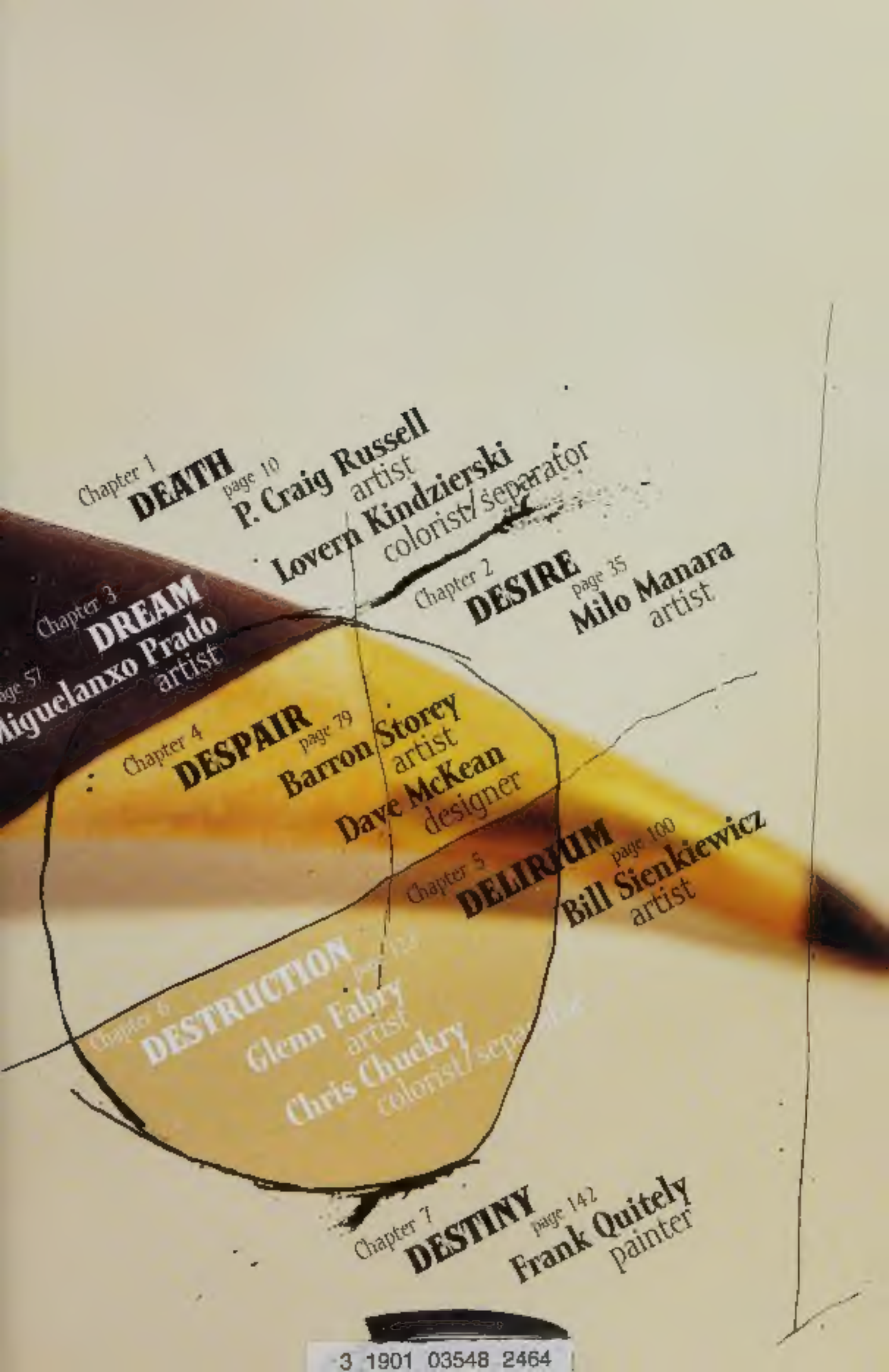
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All stories written by
Neil Gaiman.
All stories lettered by
Todd Klein.



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INTRODUCTION by Neil Gaiman

I.

Between 1987 and 1996 most of my working moments, and all of my sleeping ones, were given to telling one story, that of *The Sandman*.

Sandman came out more or less monthly, starting at the end of 1988. The story is collected in ten volumes, and two or three peripheral volumes, and an illustrated book which contained a retelling of an old Japanese folktale I completely made up. The story also spawned a Companion, and, more recently, an illustrated guide. Yesterday, in a hotel lobby in Turin I was asked if I could tell the story of the Sandman in twenty-five words or less. I pondered for a moment:

"The Lord of Dreams learns that one must change or die, and makes his decision," I said.

It's true, as far as it goes, although it leaves out quite a lot. Introductions always do.

II.

When I was done with *Sandman*, people asked if I would ever come back to those characters. Would I ever tell more stories about Morpheus, the King of Stories, or about his family, the Endless?

Sure, I said. One day.

This volume exists because there were artists I wanted to work with, and stories I wanted to tell, and because sometimes you look up and realize that one day is now.

III.

I've only worked with one of the artists in this book before: P. Craig Russell. One *Sandman* story "Ramadan" was one of my favourites of the individual *Sandman* issues, and it gained a peculiar notoriety by being discussed and mentioned in newspapers around the world when Baghdad fell once more in 2003.

Craig's story is the first one I wrote for this book. I was alone in Venice, the week after September 11th 2001, the day the towers fell, and I found myself pondering the nature of time and of death.

Death is the second oldest of the Endless. It's hard not to love her. She loves you, after all.

Milo Manara has been an artist whose work in comics I've admired for many years: his graphic novel *Indian Summer*, written by Hugo Pratt, is one of the high points of the comics medium. The notion that Manara would draw me a tale of Desire was one of the things that carried me into the book you are now holding.

The story itself was loosely inspired by a historical anecdote mentioned by George MacDonald Fraser.

I met Miguelanxo Prado in 1996, in the Andalusian town of Gijon (graffitied by the locals, on road signs, to Xixon). In Gijon, or Xixon, the mists come off the Atlantic in the morning rendering the town entirely imaginary. When I saw Prado's art I knew I wanted to write something for him to draw.

Chronologically, this is the earliest Sandman story I've ever told. While it is true that I am someone who prefers mysteries to explanations, I found it pleasurable here to explain a number of things.

It would be several hundred million years before Death would cheer up, and longer than that before Delight became Delirium.

The Despair we meet in this story is the first Despair.

Barron Storey is a San Franciscan, an artist, a teacher, an illustrator, and a member of the Brotherhood of the Black Dog. His influence in the world of art has been enormous. I met him through Dave McKean, and soon found myself proposing that we create a big story of small stories together, to be called 25 Portraits of Despair.

I think, on reflection, that it is probably a good thing that we only created 15 Portraits of Despair.

Barron and I would both like to thank Dave McKean for his astonishing design and typographical work on the portraits.




Chapter 1
DEATH
Death and Venice
art by P. Craig Russell

Afloat, where the darkness closes over me, like canal-water or the grave, I tell this story...

THEY USED UP THEIR FUTURE AS THEY USED UP THEIR PAST, TAKING EVERYTHING IN ONE LONG DAY, OVER AND OVER

THE COUNT TO WHOM THE PALAZZO BELONGED, HAD DECIDED THAT IT WAS HIS DESIRE TO BE CRUSHED TO DEATH BY A BULL ELEPHANT, BETWEEN TWO BEAUTIFUL VIRGINS, AT THE MOMENT OF ORGASM

IT WAS AN IMMEDIATE JOKE MADE BY ALL ON THE ISLAND THAT THE VIRGINS WERE HARDER AND MORE EXPENSIVE TO PROCURE THAN THE ELEPHANT, ALTHOUGH IN FACT, THE REVERSE WAS THE TRUTH

THE ELEPHANT SWAM TO THE ISLAND AHEAD OF THE COUNT'S OWN SKIFF, AND LANDED AT EXACTLY 3:00 PM

AT 3:02 PM A FLOCK OF SNOW-WHITE DOVES ROSE INTO THE AIR AND FLEW ACROSS THE ISLAND


YES!
(YES!)
WAS
MUST
GO

I walk past echoing canals as green as old glass houses shuttered and older than sin

and I hear bells — church bells, striking the hour

and the shrill blips and bleeps of mobile phones

I have forgotten most of the Italian I learned in my childhood, which means that most of the voices I hear around me are companionable, reassuring, but not relevant. I do not try and make sense of what I hear.

Even when what I hear becomes a tinny, relentless techno version of the Macarena

HEY YOU AMERICAN? YES, LADY? YOU ARE WATCHING THE PUPPETS DANCE? HERE, LET ME SHOW YOU HOW THEY DANCE ON THE AIR


YOU SEE THE MAGNETS ON FEET? AND MAGNET ON HEAD? THEY FEEL THE MUSIC, THEY DANCE LIKE DANCING COKE CAN
YES?
ONLY FIVE DOLLAR EACH
OH. THESE ARE JUST SO CUTE AND WHAT DO I DO TO MAKE THEM DANCE?
JUST PUT THEM CLOSE TO SPEAKERS, PLAY MUSIC. THEY WILL DANCE ONLY FIVE DOLLAR
FOR YOU, TEN FOR FORTY DOLLAR
THEY ARE THE CUTEST THINGS MY GRANDCHILDREN WILL LOVE THEM
EXCUSE ME, SORRY TO BUTT IN, BUT IF YOU TAKE THEM HOME FOR YOUR KIDS, THEY WON'T DANCE IT'S JUST AN ILLUSION
HE IS MAD
GO AWAY MAD MAN
THERE'S A MOTOR IN THE DUFFEL BAG. A MONOFILAMENT LINE RUNNING FROM THE BAG TO THE BOOMBOX THE PUPPETS HANG ON THE LINE AND ARE JERKING UP AND DOWN
5 MAGNETS!
NO MAGNETS NO MAGIC JUST STRING SO FINE YOU CAN'T SEE IT WHEN IT'S MOVING BUT IF YOU WANT TO PAY FIVE DOLLARS EACH FOR PAPER DOLLS, YOU GO AHEAD
I SEE THANK YOU, YOUNG MAN
EH THIS IS HOW I EARN MY LIVING PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE
He has a point There are worse ways to earn a living I leave him be

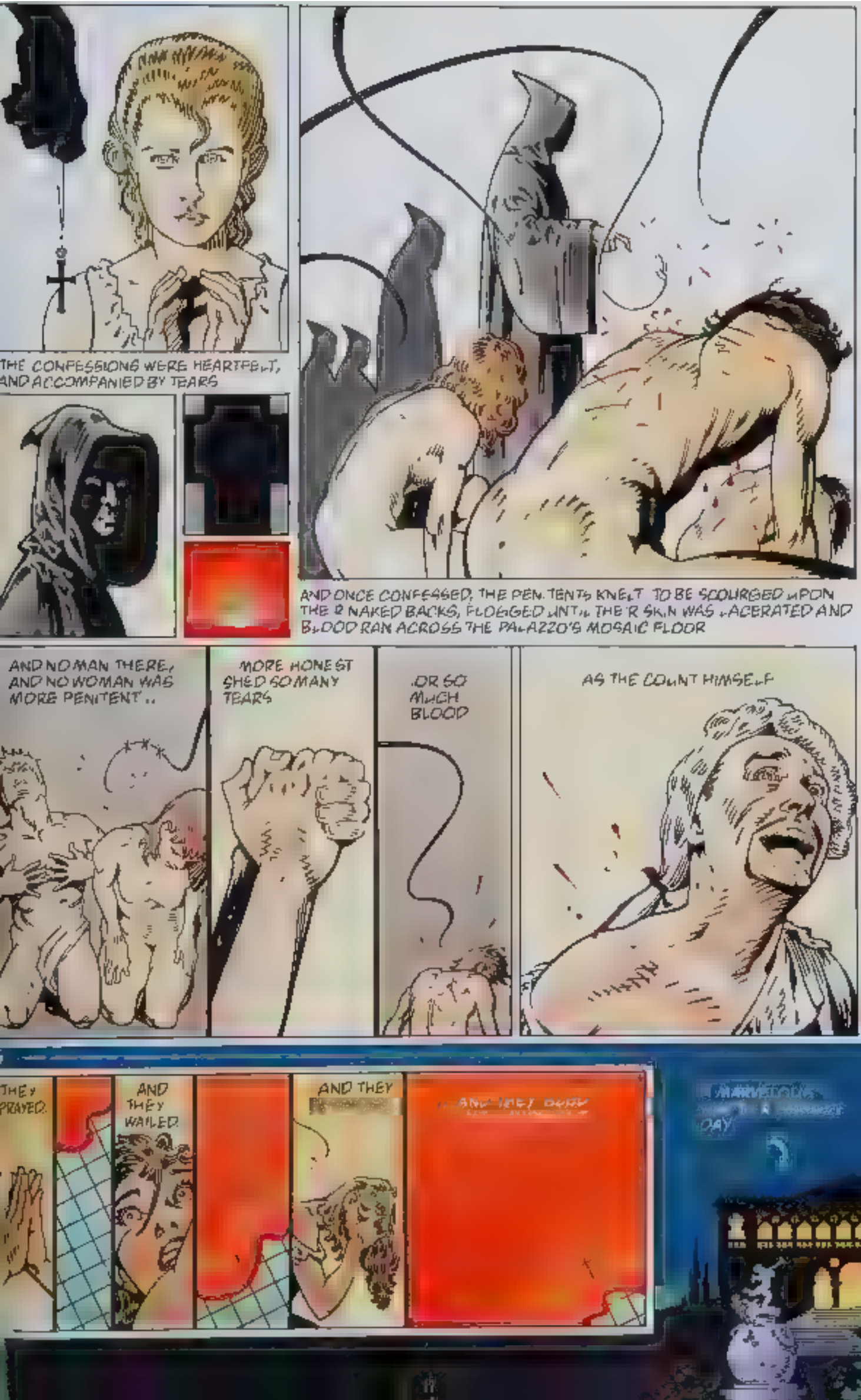
THE COUNT ROSE AT NINE, AND ANNOUNCED A DAY OF PENITENCE AND MORTIFICATION

NOTHING WAS EATEN FOR LUNCH THAT DAY BUT STALE BREAD, AND DRIED FISH, AND WATERED WINE.

A DEPUTATION FROM THE PALAZZO VISITED THE MONASTERY ON THE NORTHERN SHORE OF THE ISLAND...

...AND A TROUPE OF MONKS, HUMORLESS AND HOLY MEN, EVERY ONE OF THEM, FILED UP TO THE PALAZZO AT 2:00 PM.

AT 3:02 PM A FLOCK OF SNOW-WHITE DOVES ROSE INTO THE AIR AND FLEW ACROSS THE ISLAND


THE CONFESSIONS WERE HEARTFELT, AND ACCOMPANIED BY TEARS
AND ONCE CONFESSED, THE PENITENTS KNELT TO BE SCOURGED UPON THE BARE NAKED BACKS, FLOGGED UNTIL THE SKIN WAS LACERATED AND BLOOD RAN ACROSS THE PALAZZO'S MOSAIC FLOOR
AND NO MAN THERE, AND NO WOMAN WAS MORE PENITENT..
MORE HONEST SHED SO MANY TEARS
..OR SO MUCH BLOOD
AS THE COUNT HIMSELF
THEY PRAYED.
AND THEY WAILED
AND THEY
..AND THEY DIED
MARVELOUS
DAY

They've been parting visitors from their money for so long here in Venice that they can't help but be good at it. Ironically they give value for money. That last encounter left a sour taste in my mouth. I may want meat the tourists when I come here as a boy.

And that starts me remembering once again.

I have remembered this too much, so now I can no longer be sure whether it is the event that I am remembering or my memory of the event.

A hot still day. Lizards on the side of a brick wall within me vanish.

You could catch them if you were fast enough. But if you grabbed a tail, by the time it would break off wriggling in your hand. While the lizard ran away.

I had been staying with my aunt and uncle with my cousins. Their Italian was not good but I could make myself understood and we all spoke some English.

We loaded the pasta food and the bottles of fruit juice and the wine into my uncle's aperette. The water taxi came in close and we transferred out into the lagoon until we reached the island.

There are many islands in the Venice lagoon. Over the years they have all been inhabited my uncle told me as I pointed to Murano the closest. But as time went on we passed by the islands that hold factories barracks munitions convents as we passed.

I remember the slosh, slosh, slosh of the water against the side of the motorboat.


WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN IN THE ARMY. WE WERE STATIONED ON THIS ISLAND ON THE NORTH SIDE IS AN OLD MONASTERY.
NOW IT'S ALL RUINS BUT IS A GOOD PLACE FOR A PICNIC
YOU KEEP AWAY FROM THE RUINS THEY WILL BE DANGEROUS
YES, UNCLE
We all ate bread and fish and fruit and chocolate We drank apricot juice. the adults drank wine Then my parent and Uncle sat beneath an old fig tree and read a book or argued and sent us to play with one final warning to keep well away from any ruins
We played hide-and-seek across the southern half of the island. clambering over ruined walls
I grew bored with the game or perhaps my cousins had hidden themselves too well
I kept walking


HELLO, SERGE
HAVE YOU SEEN ANY OTHER KIDS AROUND HERE LIKE ME? WE WERE PLAYING
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYBODY HERE IN A LONG TIME
It didn't seem strange to me that she knew my name, or that she talked my language.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WATCHING THAT GATE I'M WAITING FOR THE DAY THAT IT OPENS.
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO AROUND IT?
THAT WOULDN'T BE FAIR AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT I'D REACH THE SAME PLACES IF I WENT AROUND IT?
IT'S LOCKED
OR IT'S RUSTED SHUT
IT WON'T OPEN


I CAN WAIT
MMM FFF
SERGE!!
WHERE WERE YOU?
WHY DIDN'T YOU COME WHEN WE CALLED?
WE LOOKED FOR HOURS! PAPA IS FURIOUS!
Somehow it all seemed to have been moving too fast. I stood frozen there, and perhaps it was true that I was in disgrace, and remained so for the remainder of my stay.
In time, I came to believe I had imagined the whole thing. And yet, I'm sure I never took my eyes off the fence once again.


AT NINE IN THE MORNING, THE COUNT AROSE AND DECLARED FOR THAT EVENING A MASKED BALL OF UNPARALLELED SPLENDOR AND MAGNIFICENCE
CASKS OF SHERRY WERE BROUGHT UP FROM THE CELLARS, ALONG WITH BOTTLES OF THE FINEST WINES
ANIMALS WERE SLAUGHTERED AND SPITTED
COSTUMES WERE EXAMINED, MASKS WERE PURCHASED AND REPAIRED. THE WORD WAS SENT TO VENICE, AND THE SURROUNDING ISLANDS.
AT 3:02 PM A FLOCK OF SNOW-WHITE DOVES ROSE INTO THE AIR AND FLEW ACROSS THE ISLAND
NOBLEWOMEN
COURTEGANS!
NUNS, FROM THE CONVENT OF SAN MICHELE DI MURANO, HERE IN DEFIANCE OF THEIR VOWS

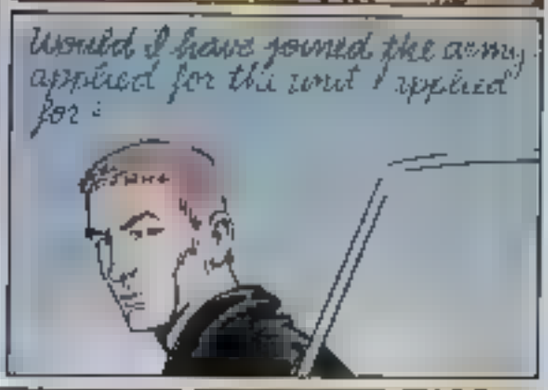

EACH REVELLER MORE RESPLENDENT THAN THE LAST WAS A SYMPHONY IN BLUE A CONFECTION IN SCARLET A STUDY IN OLIVE OR VERMILION OR WHITE, FOR THE COUNT HAD DECREED THAT THE COLOR BLACK WAS FORBIDDEN ON HIS ISLAND
IT CARRIED OVERTONES WITH WHICH HE WAS NOT ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, MY LORD ABBOT?
I AM THINKING THAT YOUR WINE IS GOOD, SIRE
AND THE DAY? WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE DAY?
THE DAY, AS ALWAYS, IS PERFECT
MY FRIENDS!
MY LOVED ONES!
MY ENEMIES
WE LIVE IN A PERFECT TIME, HERE IN OUR DAY WE LOVE, WE FIGHT, WE GAMBLE, WE DRINK WE DO ALL WE DO IN OUR PERFECT DAY UNTOUCHED BY TIME, UNTAKEN BY DEATH
HERE, IN OUR DAY, JUDGMENT DAY WILL COME AND GO, AND THE SUN WILL FLARE INTO NOTHINGNESS, A COLD CINDER AND STILL WE SHALL HAVE FINE WEATHER, AND ALL THE WEALTH AND RESOURCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE TO DRAW UPON
TOMORROW, THE INQUISITION WILL ARRIVE, TO INVESTIGATE MY ALCHEMICAL RESEARCHES. TOMORROW THE COUNCIL OF TEN WILL CALL FOR ME TO BE IMPRISONED BENEATH THE LEADS BUT THAT TOMORROW WILL NEVER COME
A TOAST!
TO OUR ISLAND.
AND TO OUR PERFECT DAY!


DOES THIS VAPORETTO GO ALL THE WAY TO THE ISLANDS?
ANYWHERE AS LONG AS YOU PAY YOU WAIT AT LEAST AN HOUR AT THE ISLANDS
MY BROTHER CAN TAKE YOU ANYWHERE YOU WANT IN HIS GONDOLA MURANO

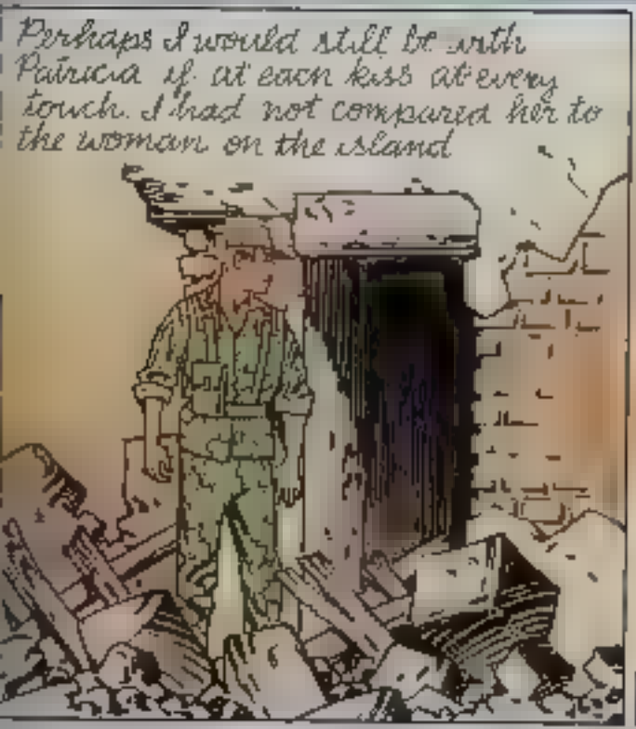
And as we race I find myself wondering. If my life would have been different – if say I had not gone to the island as a boy







Perhaps I would still be with Patricia if at each kiss at every touch I had not compared her to the woman on the island



Her eyes were not so dark and sparkling



Her smile were never so haunting



I channel that longing for something I cannot reach into my job. I do it efficiently. Someone has to.



I tell the appetite down to wait for me






HELLO YOU CAME BACK I THOUGHT YOU WOULD
Everything moved slowly when I saw her The rain seemed to fall gently like snowflakes
YOU KNOW, I ALMOST THOUGHT I HAD IMAGINED YOU
NO I'M REAL
DO YOU COME OUT HERE EVERY DAY? OR DO YOU LIVE HERE ON THE ISLAND?
I GET AROUND YOU KNOW, YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON EVER TO COME BACK
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU DID THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE?
I TRIED TO OPEN THE GATE
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY AGAIN?
YOU KNOW THERE'S PROBABLY SOME LAW PROTECTING HISTORICAL REMAINS
I pulled it was set fast into the brick I was angry with myself I thought I should have brought a sledge - hammer or a crowbar or a wrecking ball
Then I thought to kick it.

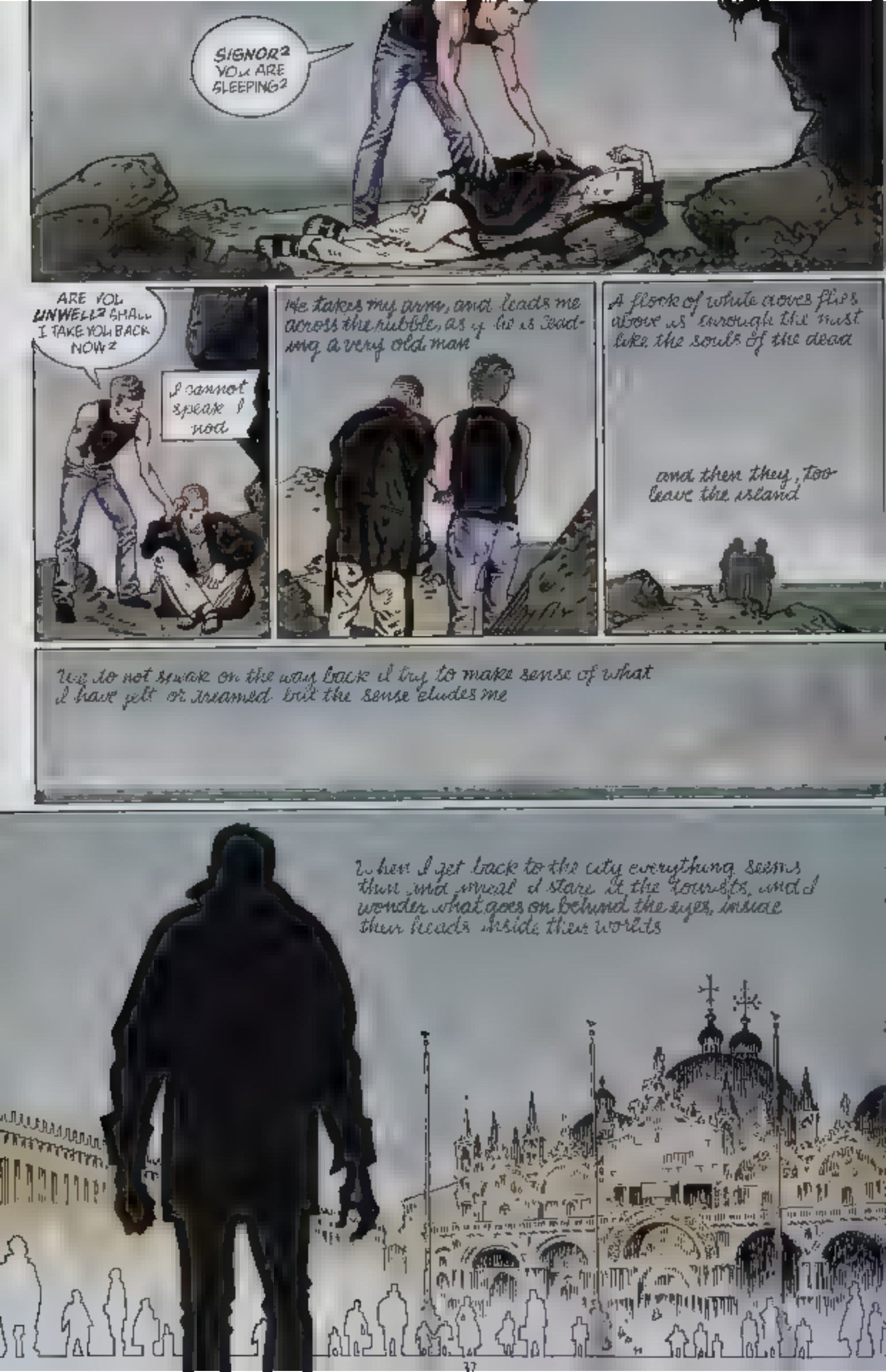

And kicking that damned gate seemed suddenly to be the most satisfying thing I could do.
I was kicking at my life
At my family
At my aunt
At death at time. at every lie I had ever been told
At every paper doll juggling on its invisible string..
YOU DID IT!
WHERE ARE WE?
MAY THE 23rd 1751
THAT'S A WHEN, NOT A WHERE
HERE, IT'S A WHERE
CAN YOU WAIT HERE?
I HAVE BUSINESS INSIDE
I WANT TO COME WITH YOU
OKAY. I GUESS.


YOU WANT TO BLEND IN DON'T YOU? COME ON LET'S SPOIL THE PARTY
YOU LOOK MOST LOVELY, YOUNG LADY
WILL YOU WALK WITH ME?
ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE GIUSEPPE YOU DIED OF SYPHILIS IN 1768 IN AN ATTIC IN TRIESTE
HE DROWNED IN A STORM
SHE DIED IN CHILD BIRTH
AS AN OLD MAN HE CHOKED ON A BONE IN A BOWL OF FISH SOUP

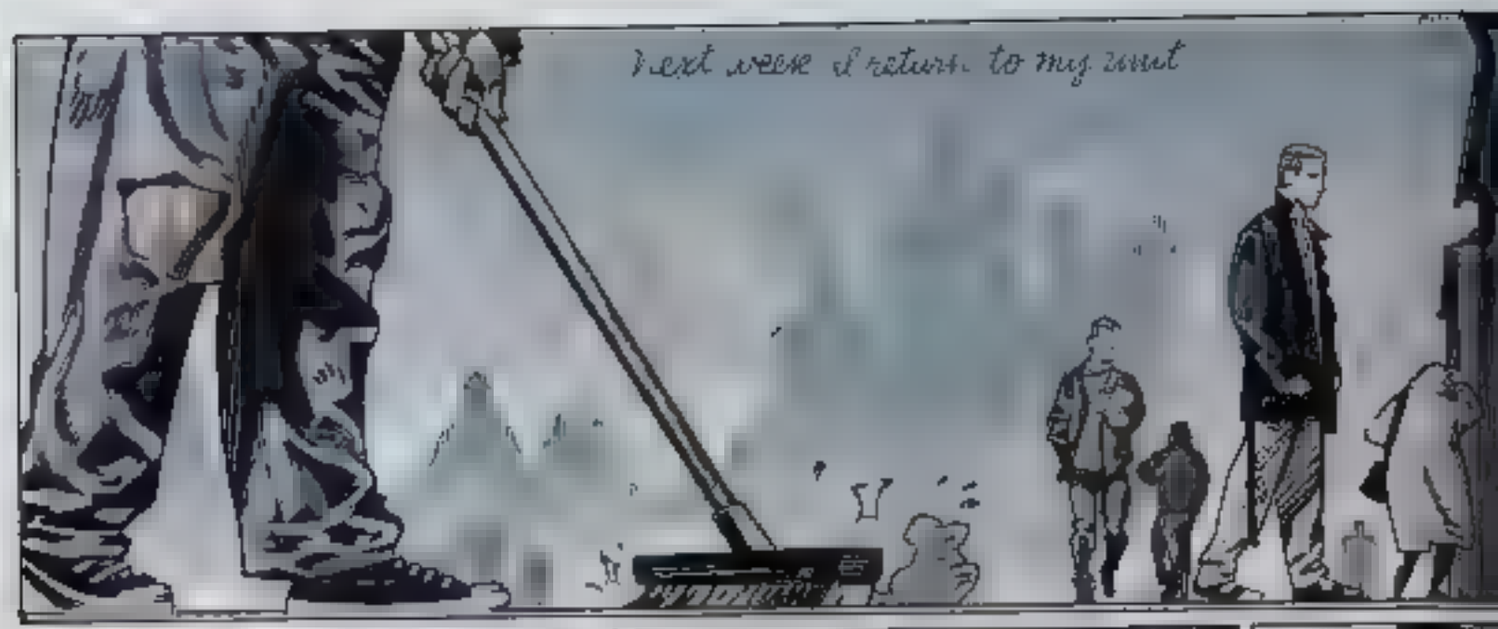

YOU PLAY CHESS WELL, MAR E. BUT YOU DO NOT PLAY AS WELL AS I DO.
WE SHALL SEE, MY LORD ONE OF US SHALL PAY THE PRICE TONIGHT
MY LORD! THERE ARE PE OPLE DYING!
THEN TIDY THE BOD.E-S AWAY, OR MAKE AN ART ST C ARRANGEMENT OF THEM DO NOT D STURB ME
NO, MY -ORD THEY ECAY THEY CRUMBLE TO DUST.
AH THAT W LL BE ALL, MY DEARS
BUT YOU PROMISED! YOU PROMISED THAT WE WERE FREE FROM TIME HERE
PLEASE ENOUGH
MY LORD! WE HAVE CAPTURED INTRUDERS A STRANGER AND HIS WOMAN BOTH OF THEM ARE DRESSED IN BLACK
SO.
OU ARE TIME OUL TIME, WHO EALS THE GOLD ROM A MAIDEN'S AIR AND TAKES THE SAPPHIRE FROM A CHILD'S EYES
DARK TIME, WHO HAS STOLEN FROM EVERY THING THERE EVER WAS THE THINGS THAT IT HELD PRECIOUS AND DIVINE.
AND LEFT NOTHING BUT MEMORIES AND ASHES AND THE GRAVE


I SEALED THAT GATE MYSELF I BARRED TIME FROM THIS PLACE, AND FORCED YOU TO OBEY MY EVERY WHIM
WHAT'S HE SAYING? I DON'T UNDERSTAND
IT'S JUST A SPEECH HE WROTE FOR TONIGHT THE USUAL STUFF YOU AREN'T MISSING ANYTHING.
MY WISDOM AND MY MAGIC AND MY POWER AND IF WE DIED TODAY, SO WHAT?
TOMORROW WOULD BE ANOTHER PERFECT DAY AND NOW ALTHOUGH MY DAY IS ENDING, STILL I SHALL GAIN MY IMMORTALITY AS THE MAN WHO SLEW TIME HIMSELF AND FREED US ALL FROM HIS PROFOUND EMBRACE
NOW HE'S SAYING THAT HE'S GOING TO KILL YOU
BUT THIS ISN'T HAPPENING, IS IT? I MEAN, WE'RE SEEING THE PAST
NO, THIS IS NOW IT'S JUST ANOTHER KIND OF NOW
ENOUGH
TOMORROW YOU VANISH
SOME SAY THE COUNCIL OF TEN TAKES YOU
SOME SAY THE INQUISITION
YOU ARE NOT TRIED
YOU SIMPLY VANISH
SEVERAL MONTHS FROM NOW A CORPSE WITH NO FACE, NO HANDS NO FEET, WILL BE PULLED FROM THE GRAND CANAL
"THIS PLACE WILL GET A VERY BAD REPUTATION. IT WILL REMAIN UNINHABITED, AND THEN, IN THE 1820s, IT BURNS TO THE GROUND."

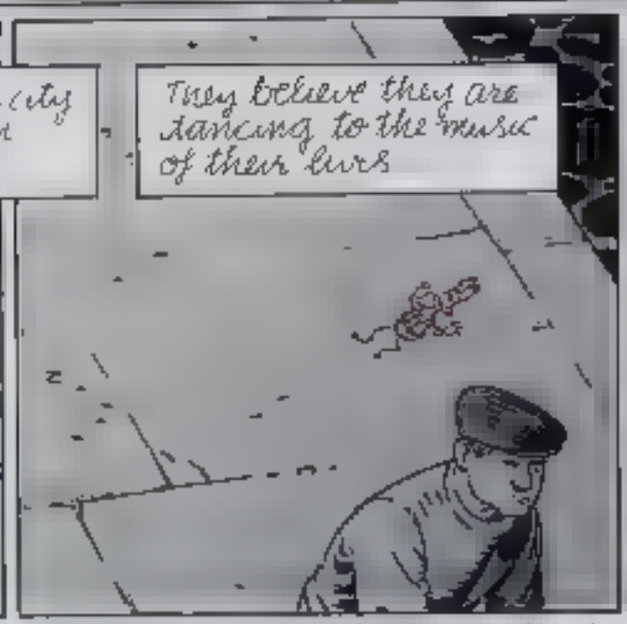

WHO ARE YOU?
DON'T YOU KNOW ME?
YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL
I MISSED YOU SO BADLY
I KNOW ALAIN
TAKE MY HAND


SIGNOR? YOU ARE SLEEPING?
ARE YOU UNWELL? SHALL I TAKE YOU BACK NOW?
I cannot speak I nod
He takes my arm, and leads me across the rubble, as if he is leading a very old man
A flock of white doves flies above us through the mist like the souls of the dead
and then they, too leave the island
We do not speak on the way back I try to make sense of what I have felt or dreamed but the sense eludes me
When I get back to the city everything seems thin and unreal I stare at the tourists, and I wonder what goes on behind the eyes, inside their heads inside their worlds


I shall see her again
I know that in my heart
In a last time
until then I shall continue to send people to her









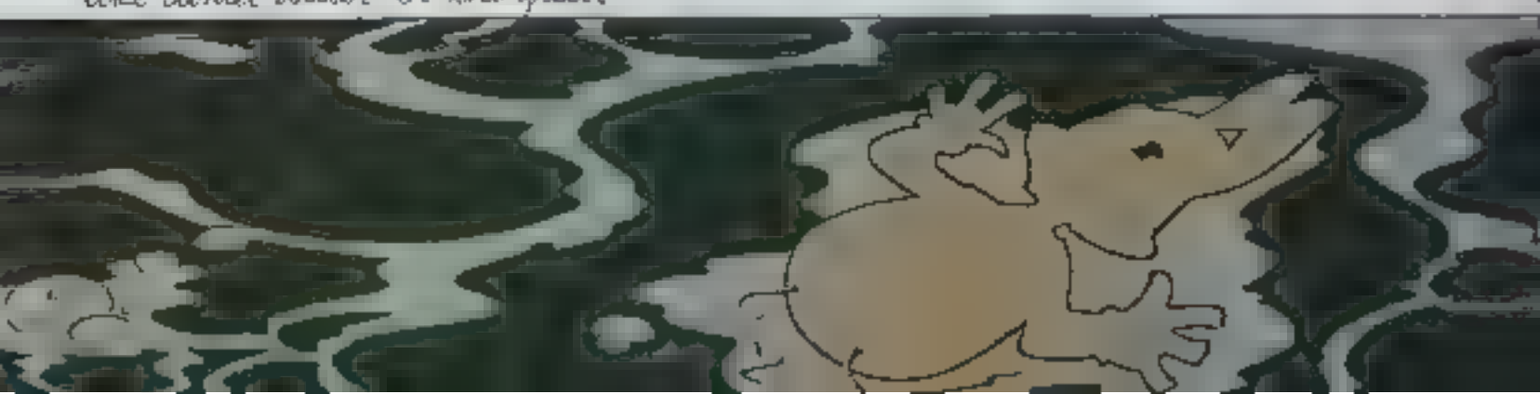
But I think like the puppets each of us is pulled upon invisible strings until the night comes and we are put away







I shiver and hurry from the square as the darkness of the city closes over me like canal water of the grave

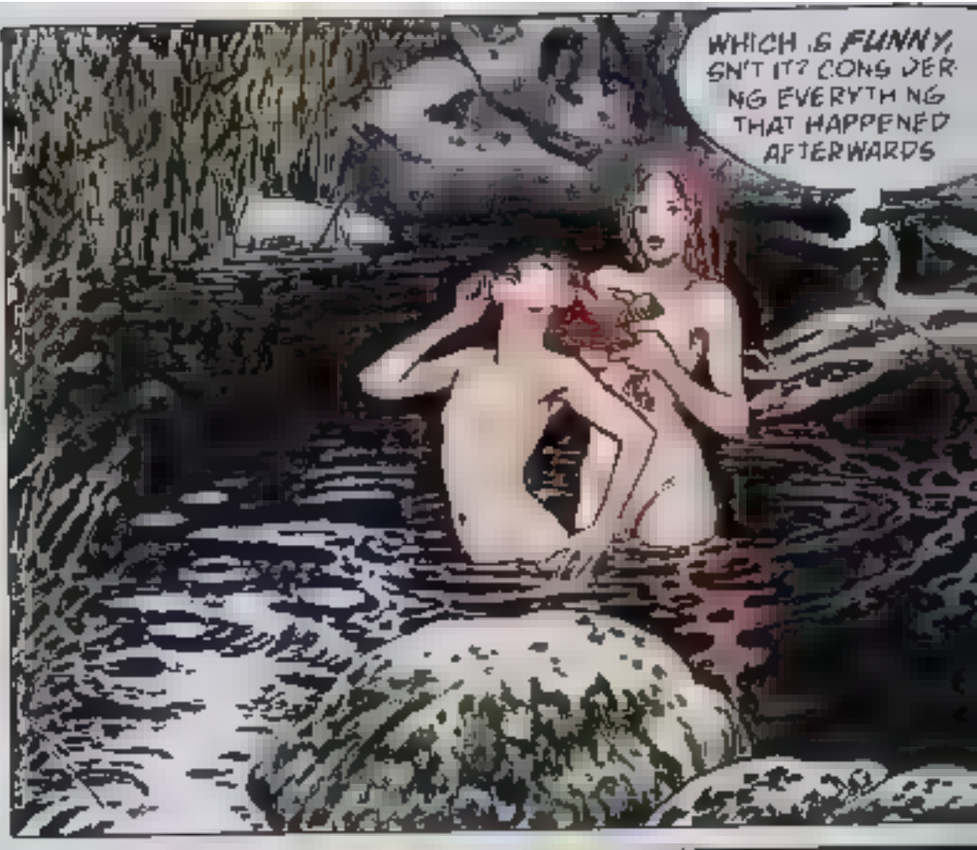


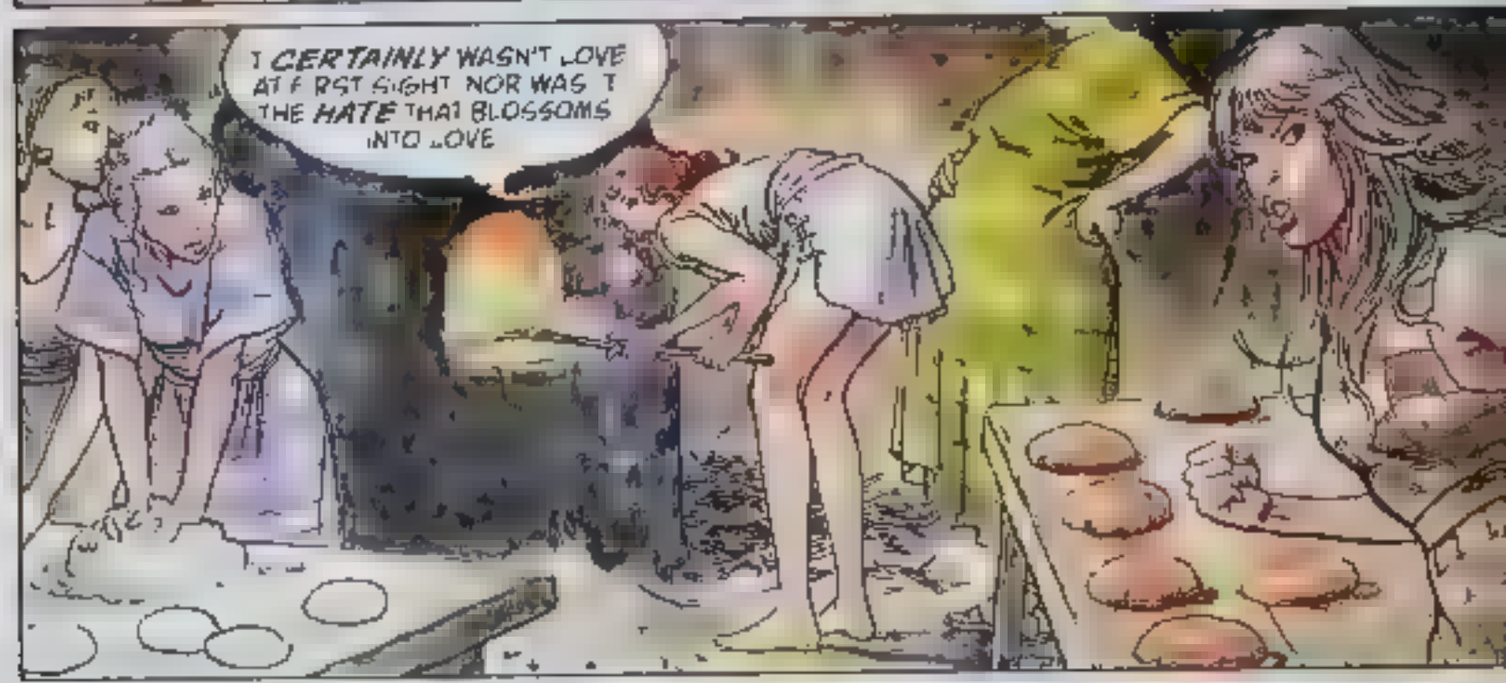

Chapter 2
DESIRE

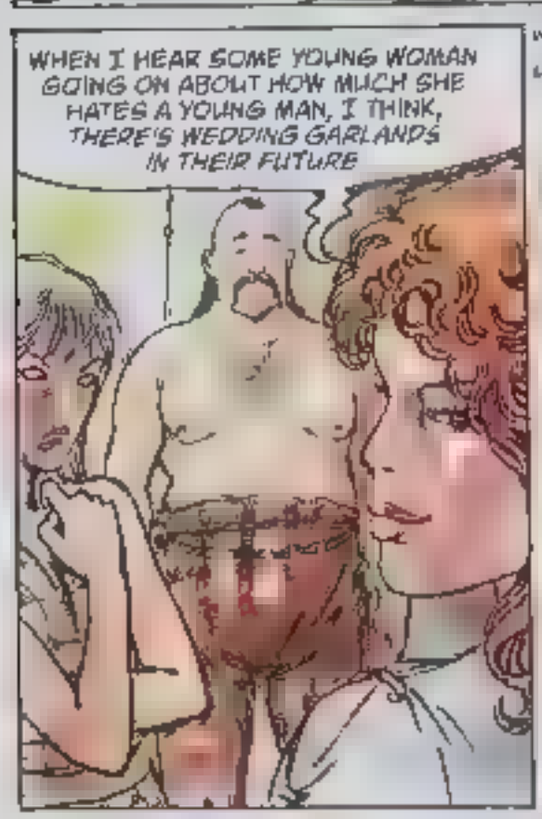

What I've tasted of Desire
art by Milo Manara

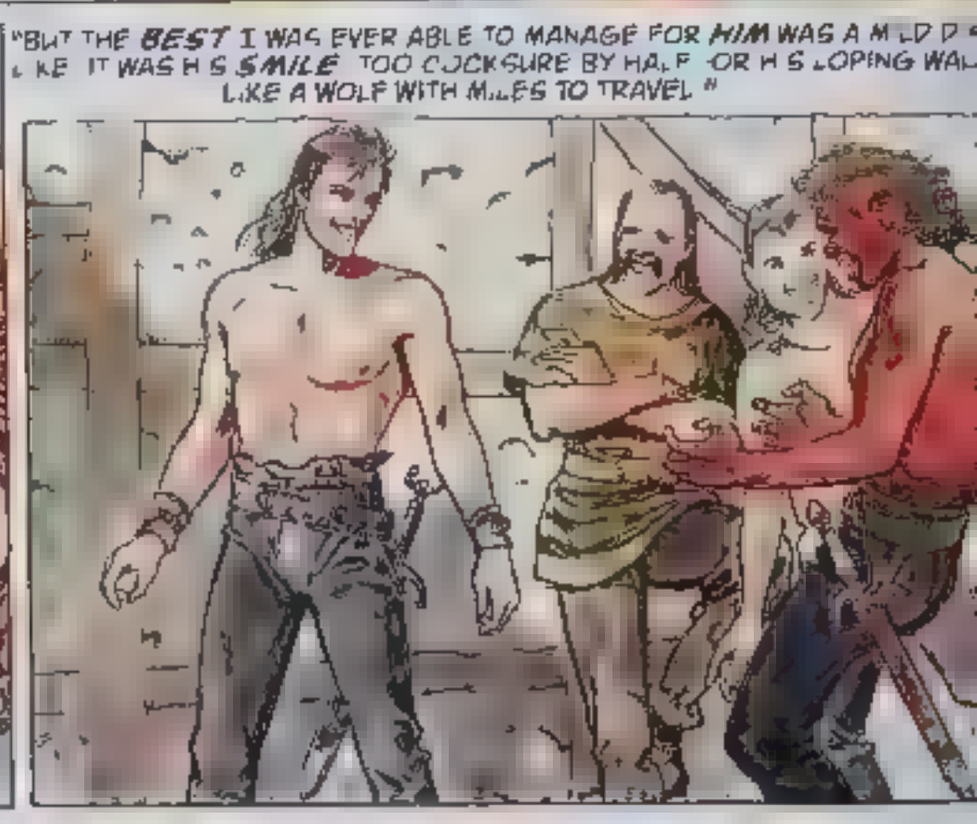

I SAW THAT BOY
OU LIKE HE WAS
K SS NG A G R.
I COULD SEE
THEM
I DON'T . KE H M
I DON'T KNOW WHY
YOU KEEP SAY NG
THAT
SISTERS
KNOW SISTERS
KNOW EVERY-
THING.

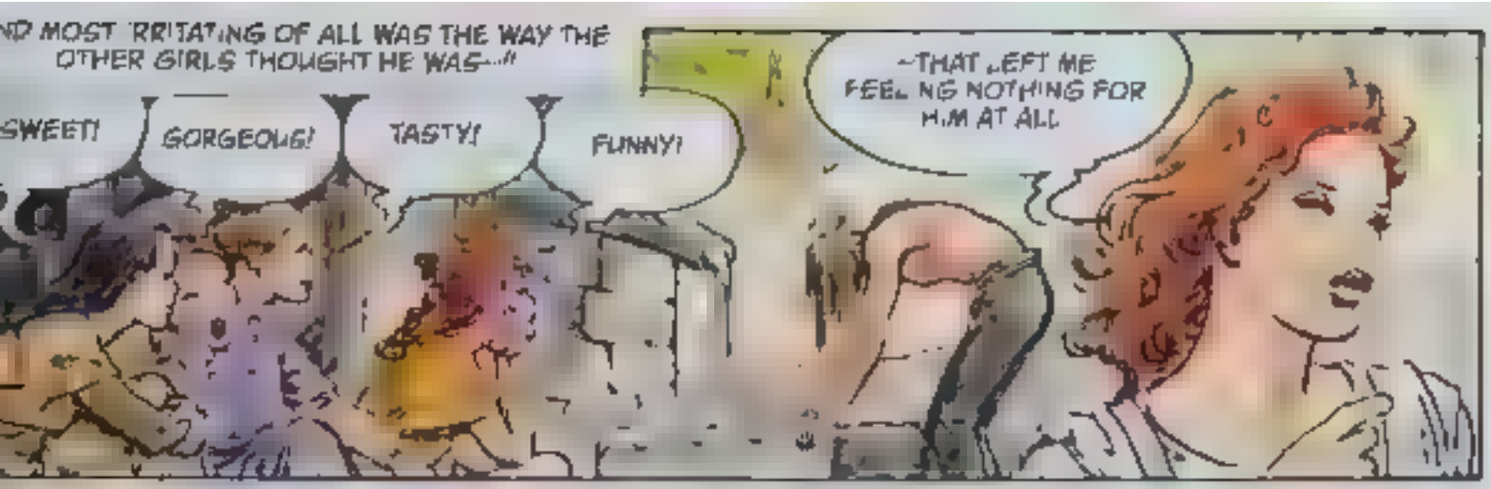

I COULDN'T TELL YOU WHEN I FELL IN *LOVE* WITH HIM. TO TELL THE TRUTH, I DON'T THINK I COULD EVEN SAY FOR CERTAIN WHEN I FIRST BECAME *AWARE* OF H M.


WHICH S *FUNNY*, SN'T IT? CONS DER NG EVERYTH NG THAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS


I *CERTAINLY* WASN'T LOVE AT F RST SIGHT NOR WAS T THE *HATE* THAT BLOSSOMS INTO LOVE


WHEN I HEAR SOME YOUNG WOMAN GOING ON ABOUT HOW MUCH SHE HATES A YOUNG MAN, I THINK, *THERE'S WEDDING GARLANDS IN THEIR FUTURE*

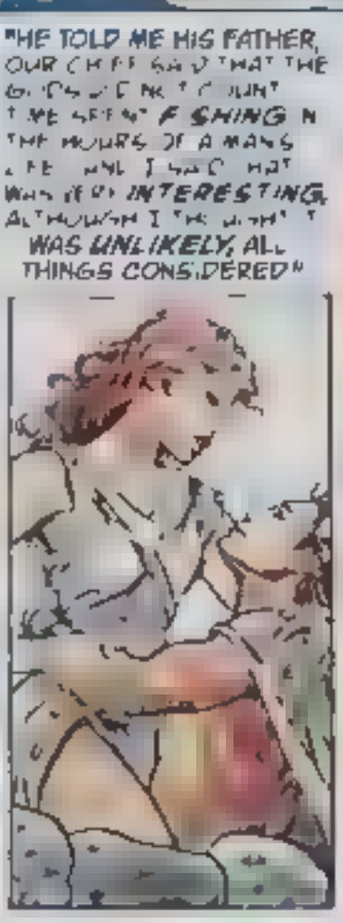

"BUT THE *BEST* I WAS EVER ABLE TO MANAGE FOR *HIM* WAS A M LD D " L KE IT WAS H S *SMILE* TOO COCKSURE BY HA F OR H S LOPING WAL LIKE A WOLF WITH M LES TO TRAVEL "


ND MOST IRRITATING OF ALL WAS THE WAY THE OTHER GIRLS THOUGHT HE WAS—!!
SWEET!
GORGEOUS!
TASTY!
FUNNY!
—THAT LEFT ME FEELING NOTHING FOR HIM AT ALL


SOME OF THEM DESIRED HIM FOR HIS SKILL IN BATTLE FOR IN THOSE DAYS THERE WERE ALWAYS BORDER SKIRMISHES, AND WOLVES ATTACKING IN THE WINTER AND HE LOOK HEADS AND PELTS AS EASILY AS HE LOOK HEARTS."

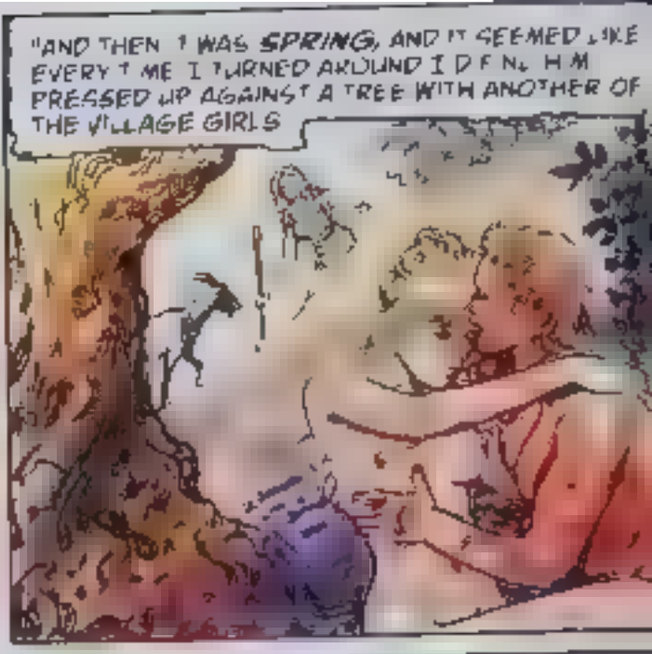

WE'D MEET, OF COURSE, AND TALK, IN THE
COULDN'T HELP MEETING PEOPLE

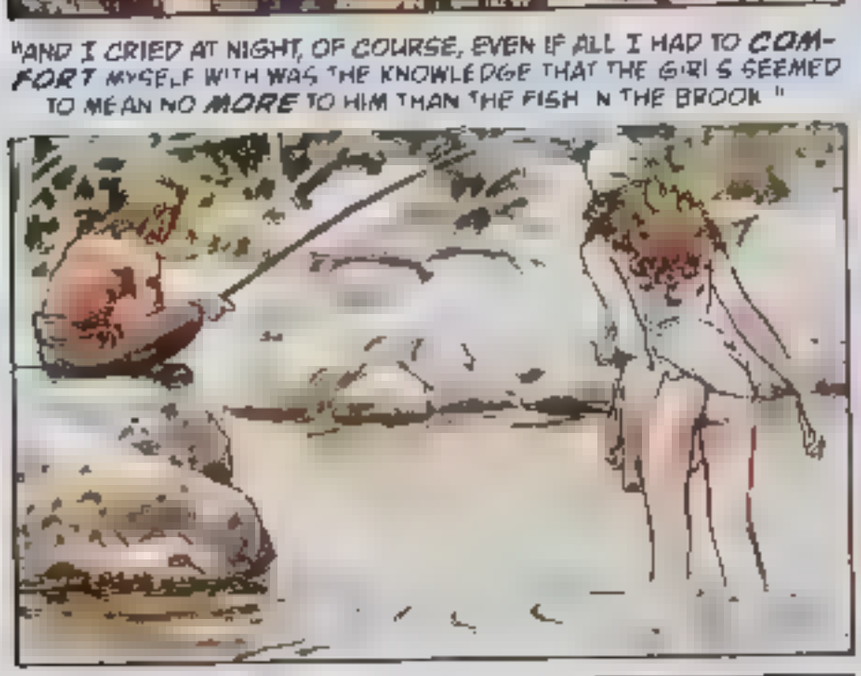

"THERE WAS ONE MORNING WE WALKED CLOSE HER HOME BY THE BROOK TO FISH. WE SAT HEAD AND THE MAY WAS THICK AS WE WALKED CLOSE, AND WE TALKED NOT ABOUT MUCH.

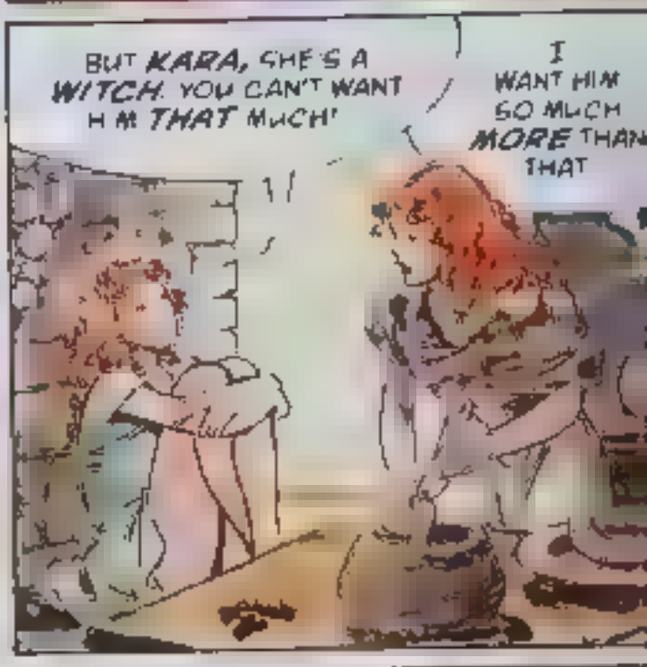

"HE TOLD ME HIS FATHER, OUR CHIEF SAID THAT THE GODDESS DIDN'T COUNT THE HOURS SPENT FISHING IN THE HOURS OF A MAN'S LIFE AND I SAID THAT WAS VERY INTERESTING, ALTHOUGH I THOUGHT IT WAS UNLIKELY, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED"

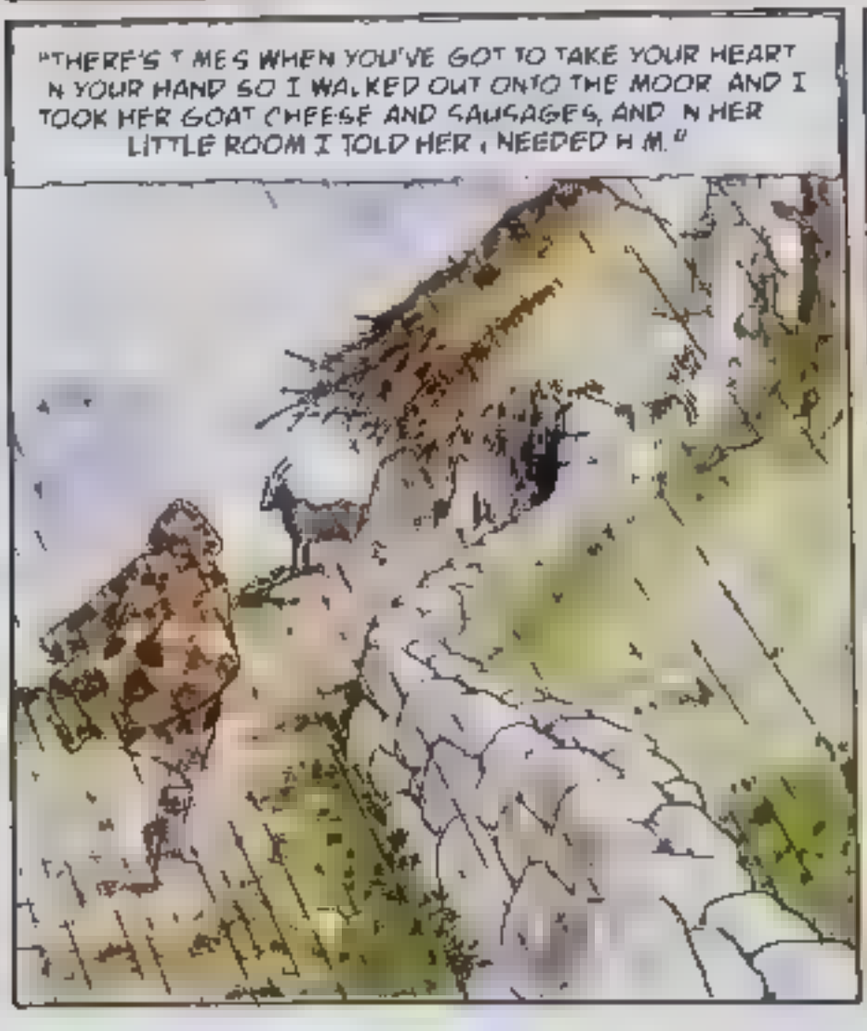

AND WHEN WE CAME TO SAY GOOD-BY AND FARE THEE WELL I COULD THINK OF NOTHING I WANTED MORE THAN TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE WITH THAT INFURIATING YOUNG MAN.
WITH HIS COCKSURE SMILE AND HIS WOLFISH WALK

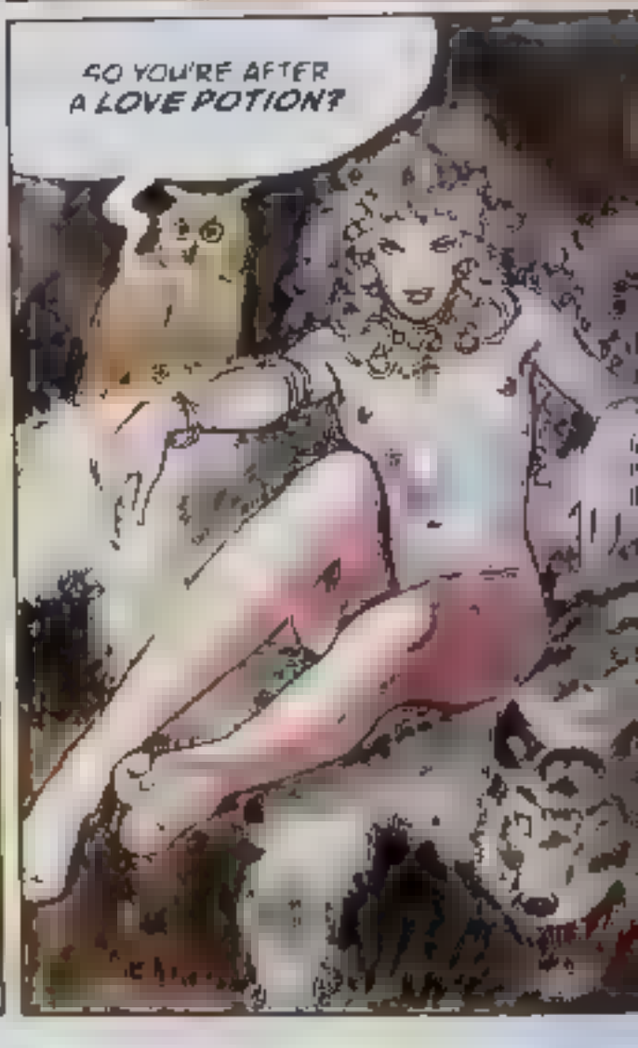

"HE NEVER SEEMED TO NOTICE ME THOUGH. AFTER THAT DAY


"AND THEN I WAS SPRING, AND IT SEEMED LIKE EVERY TIME I TURNED AROUND I'D FIND HIM PRESSED UP AGAINST A TREE WITH ANOTHER OF THE VILLAGE GIRLS


"AND I CRIED AT NIGHT, OF COURSE, EVEN IF ALL I HAD TO COMFORT MYSELF WITH WAS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE GIRLS SEEMED TO MEAN NO MORE TO HIM THAN THE FISH IN THE BROOK."


BUT KARA, SHE'S A WITCH. YOU CAN'T WANT HIM THAT MUCH!
I WANT HIM SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT


"THERE'S TIMES WHEN YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE YOUR HEART IN YOUR HAND SO I WALKED OUT ONTO THE MOOR AND I TOOK HER GOAT CHEESE AND SAUSAGES, AND IN HER LITTLE ROOM I TOLD HER I NEEDED HIM."


SO YOU'RE AFTER A LOVE POTION?

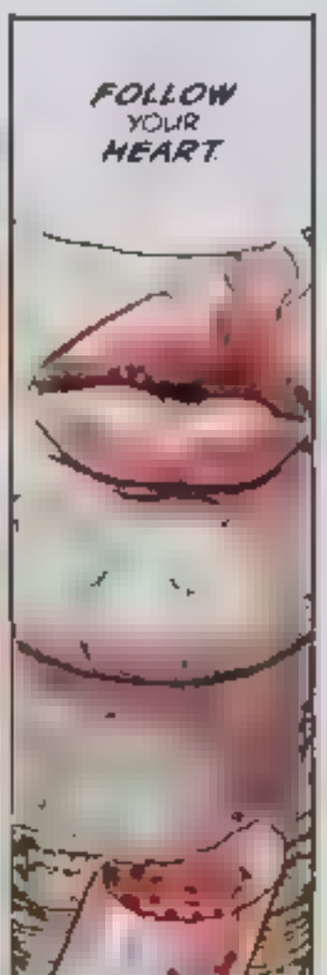

I'D NOT WANT A MAN I COULD BUY WITH A POTION. AND I DON'T BELIEVE THAT ANY OF YOUR POTIONS WORK


HEE WELL, THEY DON'T NOT WORK THEY BUY A GIRL OR A BOY THE CONFIDENCE TO MAKE A FIRST MOVE-- TO LOOK OR TO TOUCH OR TO SMILE, WHERE OTHERW SE THEY'D JUST LOOK AWAY AND SIGH.


SO IF IT'S NOT A POT ON YOU WANT, WHAT IS IT?
I WANT HIM TO WANT ME AS MUCH AS I WANT HIM
THERE ARE GODS AND GODDESSES OU COULD PRAY , OR SACRIFICE TO HEY'LL DO ANYTHING OR A LITTLE BLOOD SPILLED ON THE RIGHT STONE


I'VE NEVER CARED FOR GODS OR GODDESSES. THEIR GIFTS DON'T COME FREE
NOTHING COMES FREE, GIRL. STILL... THERE IS ONE OTHER YOU COULD TALK TO.


MAN, OR WOMAN?
BOTH, PERHAPS, OR NEITHER. LOOK FOR GOLDEN EYES. WAIT UNTIL YOU FEEL YOUR HEART BEING TUGGED WITH A LONGING THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR YOUNG MAN


FOLLOW YOUR HEART.

HE WENT SOUTH. TO THE TOWN ON THE COAST WHERE THE SHIPS CAME N TO BUY TIN FROM THE MINES THERE WAS BUSINESS TO BE DONE THERE

"HIS FATHER, OUR CHIEF, LED SEVERAL OF THE VILLAGE ELDERS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE FOLK FROM ACROSS THE R VER. WE DID NOT CARE FOR THEM."

MY OWN MOTHER HAD BEEN BORN ACROSS THE R VER AND WAS STOLEN IN A RAID WHEN SHE WAS FIFTEEN, AND *SHE* ALWAYS SAID IT WAS THE *BEST* THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO HER

"THE *NEGOTIATIONS*, FOR GRAZING RIGHTS, FOR AMBER FOR THE RANSOM OF PR SONERS, WENT *BADLY*

"SO BADLY THAT HIS FATHER AND THE WHOLE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE WERE SENT BACK ACROSS THE RIVER IN *PIECES*.

"AND WHEN I HEARD THE NEWS, I BOUN MY BREAS 'S AND PUT UP MY HAIR AND TERK IN. AND I SET OFF FOR THE COAST"

I WAS HALF A DAY'S TRAVEL ROM THE VILLAGE, AND HAD EEN NOBODY ON MY TRAVELS HEN I REALIZED THAT THERE AS A MAN COMING TOWARDS E.

"WELL, I THOUGHT IT WAS A MAN, THEN I WASN'T SO SURE, FOR THERE WAS SOMETHING DAINTY ABOUT HIS FINGERS, SOMETHING CAT-LIKE IN HIS WALK

"AND WHEN I CAME CLOSE I COULD SEE THAT HIS EYES, LIKE A CAT'S, WERE GOLDEN.

" 'AND I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN LOOK NG FOR ME,' HE SAYS

" 'I SUPPOSE,' I SA.D. 'I SUP- POSE I MIGHT HAVE BEEN '

" 'WELL THEN,' HE SAYS, 'COME INTO MY PARLOR . '

AND WITHOUT A BEAT, BETWEEN ONE MOMENT AND THE NEXT, WE VERE...I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE WERE "

AM I *DREAMING?*

NOT A *BIT* OF IT QUITE THE *REVERSE,* IF ANY- THING.


WE TALKED FOR WHAT SEEMED LIKE AN AGE. SO MUCH OF WHAT HE SAID I DID NOT UNDERSTAND.
SO MUCH MORE OF IT I HAVE FORGOTTEN.
HE TALKS ABOUT STORIES. MY BROTHER. LET ME TELL YOU THE PLOT OF EVERY ONE OF HIS DAMNED STORIES. SOMEBODY WANTED SOMETHING THAT'S THE STORY. MOSTLY THEY GET IT, TOO.
MOST PEOPLE WANT THINGS LIKE A CANDLE-FLAME, FLICKERING, SHIFTING YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, WANT LIKE A FOREST FIRE.
I SHOULD WARN YOU, GETTING WHAT YOU WANT AND BEING HAPPY ARE TWO QUITE DIFFERENT THINGS.
I KNOW THAT
WILL YOU GIVE ME WHAT I WANT?
OF COURSE NOT
SO WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME?
A SMILE, AND I'LL SAVE YOU A FEW DAYS TRAVEL
YOU'RE MARKED AS MINE BUT THEN, YOU ALWAYS WERE
AND WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
EVERY-THING. WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO WANT?


AND THEN, WITHOUT A BREAK, I COULD SMELL THE SEA-SCENT, AND HEAR THE CAW OF GULLS. AND I WAS WALKING DOWN A NARROW LANE AT DUSK.
I WALKED INTO THE FIRST HALL I SAW. HOSPITALITY TO RANGERS WAS PART OF OUR CREED. AND I SAID
YOUR FATHER'S DEAD. IT'S TIME TO COME HOME.
WHO KILLED HIM
THEM OVER THE RIVER
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
BACK TO THE HILLS. TO RULE MY PEOPLE.
WHAT ABOUT ME?
YOU'LL FIND SAILORS WITH GOLD ENOUGH IN THEIR WALLETS AND MERCHANTS WITH GIFTS AND SHOES AND PAINTED SHELLS, AND YOU'LL NOT WEEP FOR ME
COME ON, LAD. LET'S GO HOME


WE WALKED THE FIRST DAY HE SAID NOT A WORD
"THAT NIGHT THE RAIN CAME WE ATE BY THE FIRE I WATCHED HIM LOOKING AT THE RAIN AND THE SKY, AND HIS FACE WAS WET"
YOU ARE THE GOAT-GIRL I DID NOT KNOW YOU WHY DID I NOT KNOW YOU
YOU WERE DISTRACTED
WHY DID YOU COME TO TELL ME MY FATHER WAS DEAD? WHY WASN'T A MAN SENT?
I'M SURE THEY SENT A MAN BUT I CARED THE MOST I GOT TO YOU FIRST.
"HE LOOKED AT ME WITH NEW EYES, THEN"
YOU ARE A WOMAN. I AM A MAN LET US DO THE THING THAT MAN AND WOMAN DO.
LET'S NOT.
I DO IT WELL. YOU WILL HAVE NOTHING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT
SO THEY SAY
DON'T YOU WANT ME?
I WANT YOU MORE THAN THE SUN WANTS THE MOON. MORE THAN A FISH NEEDS THE RIVER MORE THAN A HEART NEEDS TO BEAT YOU ARE ALL THAT I DESIRE
THEN--
THEN I SHALL CONTINUE TO SAY NO. AND YOU WILL PLACE YOUR SWORD BETWEEN US TONIGHT. TO SHOW THAT YOU WILL LAY NO FINGER UPON ME UNLESS I ASK YOU TO AND I SHALL NOT ASK
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, EH?
THAT'S HUNT'S


SO. I'VE ASKED YOU TO MAKE LOVE TO ME YOU SAID NO, NOW I ASK YOU TO MARRY ME
AND GRATEFUL IT S I AM THAT YOU HAVE ASKED AND JUST AS GRATEFULLY DO I DECLINE
WHY, IN THE NAME OF ALL THE GODS?
BECAUSE IF YOU MARRY ME S MPLY TO QUENCH YOUR DESIRE. THEN WHEN YOU HAVE HAD YOUR F LL OF ME YOU'LL BE DONE.
A KISS, THEN?
NOT EVEN THAT.
YOU'VE CHANGED. WHO HAVE YOU BEEN TALK NG TO?
"AND I SAID NOBODY. ALTHOUGH I KNEW WHO I HAD BEEN TALKING TO, AND H S EYES- OR HER EYES WERE THE COLOR OF GOLD."


"WHEN WE RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE THE FUNERAL REVELS BEGAN: THREE DAYS OF DRUNKENNESS AND SAGAS
"I WENT UP TO THE HIGH FIELD, WITH THE GOATS, AND I WA TED."
HE WAS CHIEF OF THE CLAN, AND HE COURTED ME FOR THREE MOONS. HE BROUGHT ME GIFTS - NEVER ANYTHING USEFUL. MEN NEVER THINK LIKE THAT, BUT I SAID THANK YOU TO EACH GIFT
"AND THEN ONE DAY HE RETURNED WITH HIS CHEEK ALL CUT, AND HE LAID A LINEN WRAP AT MY FEET."
IT BELONGED TO THE MAN WHO KILLED MY FATHER. I'LL PUT IT AROUND YOUR THROAT AT OUR WEDDING. IF YOU'LL LET ME
THAT WOULD BE NICE

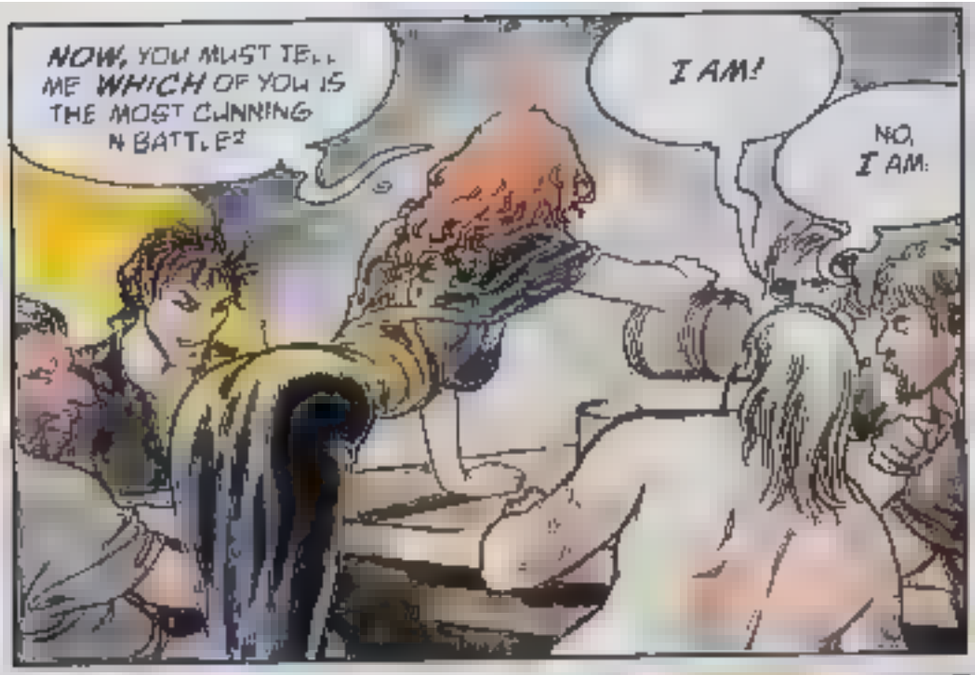

"HUNCHBACKS DANCED AT OUR WEDDING, FOR LUCK. IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU SEE ANY MORE
"OUR WEDDING NIGHT. OUTSIDE THE HALL THEY CHANTED AND CRASHED PANS AND MADE SUCH A DIN.
"AND IN OUR ROOM, WE MADE LOVE LIKE FLAMES. OPENING, BLENDING, BURNING
"WE MADE LOVE LIKE ANIMALS, LIKE GODS, LIKE DREAMS
"WAS IT WORTH WAITING FOR? GODS, YES. IT WAS WORTH WORLDS, THAT NIGHT, WORTH SOULS, WORTH ETERNITY."


"I KNEW WHAT THE VILLAGE G RLS WERE SAYING--THAT HE'D BE BORED SOON, AND BACK IN THE R BEDS
"THEN THEY LAUGH- ED THAT HE D BE THE RS ONCE MY BELLY BEGAN TO SWELL "
IT'S A PRETTY FLOWER. I'LL WEAR T BEHIND MY EAR UNTIL YOU COME BACK FROM THE COAST, AND I LL THINK OF YOU
I'LL BE BACK BEFORE YOU KNOW IT
"IT HAD BEEN A HARD WINTER THE WOLVES HAD BECOME BOLD, AND IF WE DID NOT GUARD OUR FLOCKS WE WOULD FIND THEM DEAD"
MY LADY! THERE ARE MEN AT THE GATES!
"MY HUSBAND HAD GONE TO A MEET NG OF CHIEFS THE MEN OF THE VILLAGE WERE OUT ON WOLF-WATCH, AND NOT DUE BACK UNT L DAWN."

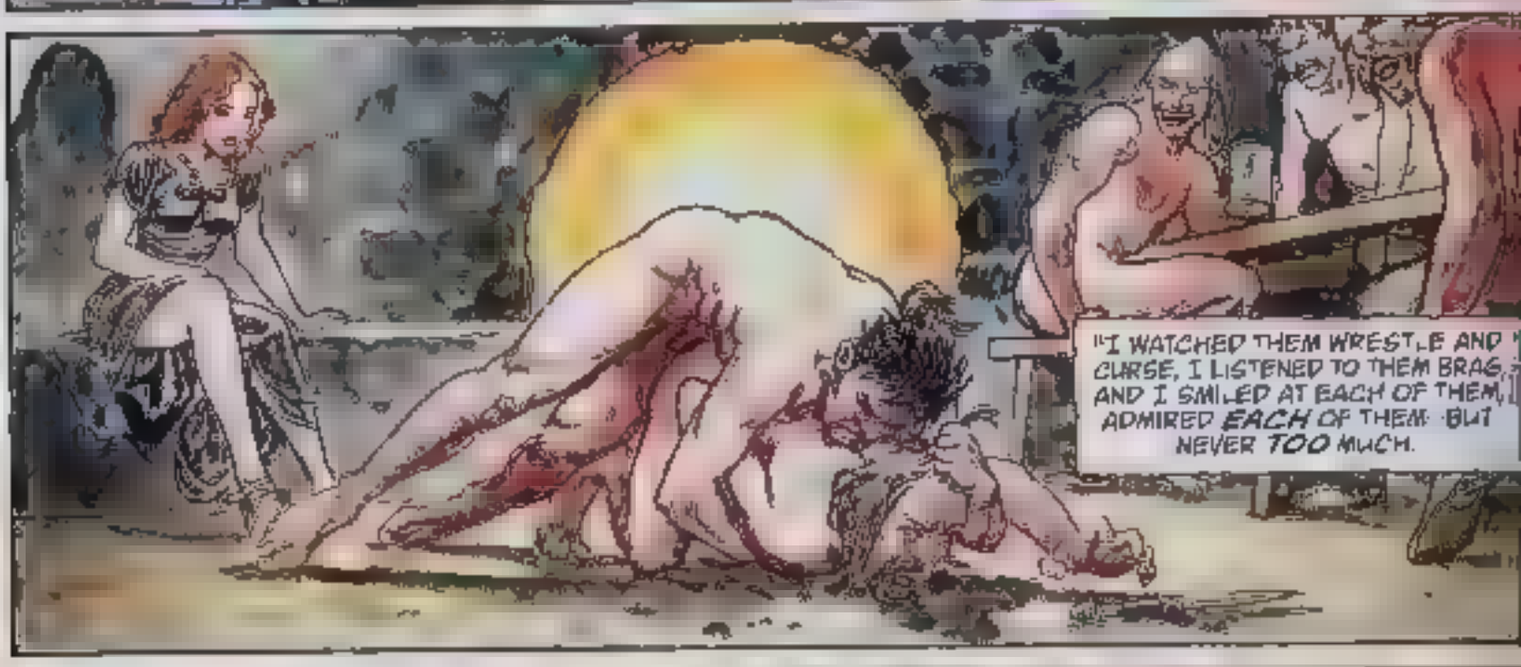

WE ASK FOR HOSPITALITY WE HAVE TRAVELLED A LONG WAY THIS DAY AND WE ARE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY
OUR OSPITAL- TY IS YOURS
I LET THEM IN. WHAT ELSE COULD I HAVE DONE? HOS PITAL TY TO STRANGERS AND TO FR ENDS THAT WAS THE WAY OF IT
PLEASE, BE SEATED I SHALL SEND FOR FOOD FOR YOU T SHALL NOT BE SAID THAT WE DO NOT TAKE CARE OF TRAVELLERS. MY ONLY REGRET S THAT MY HUSBAND CANNOT BE HERE WITH US TODAY
THERE ARE TEN OF THEM. WE SHALL NEED A BARREL OF ALE, TWO LARGE SALMON, AND A HAUNCH OF COLD VENISON AND SPIT A LAMB AND GET IT TURNING FOR LATER
YES'M


YOUR FOOD IS ON THE WAY, GENTLEMEN
I HOPE YOU ARE HUNGRY, FOR WE WILL TAKE ANY LACK OF APPETITE AS AN INSULT TO OUR VILLAGE
HERE COMES THE FIRST OF THE FOOD NOW... WHO WILL CARVE THE VENISON?
WHY YOU, YOU MUST HAVE THE STRONGEST ARMS YOU WILL CARVE FOR US, NO?
I, UH
BUT WHICH OF YOU HAS THE SHARPEST KNIFE?
NOW YOU, SIR, YOU HAVE A MARKSMAN'S EYE, AND A HUNTER'S SMILE I BET THAT WHEN YOUR KNIFE SLICES, IT CUTS TRUE. EH?
AYE
THIS IS MADNESS! YOU SAID WE'D SHOW HER HIS HEAD, SHE'D SCREAM AND WEEP AND CARRY ON, WE'D FUCK HER AT KNIFEPOINT, THEN LEAVE HER DEAD AND SCARPER
AND...?
AYE

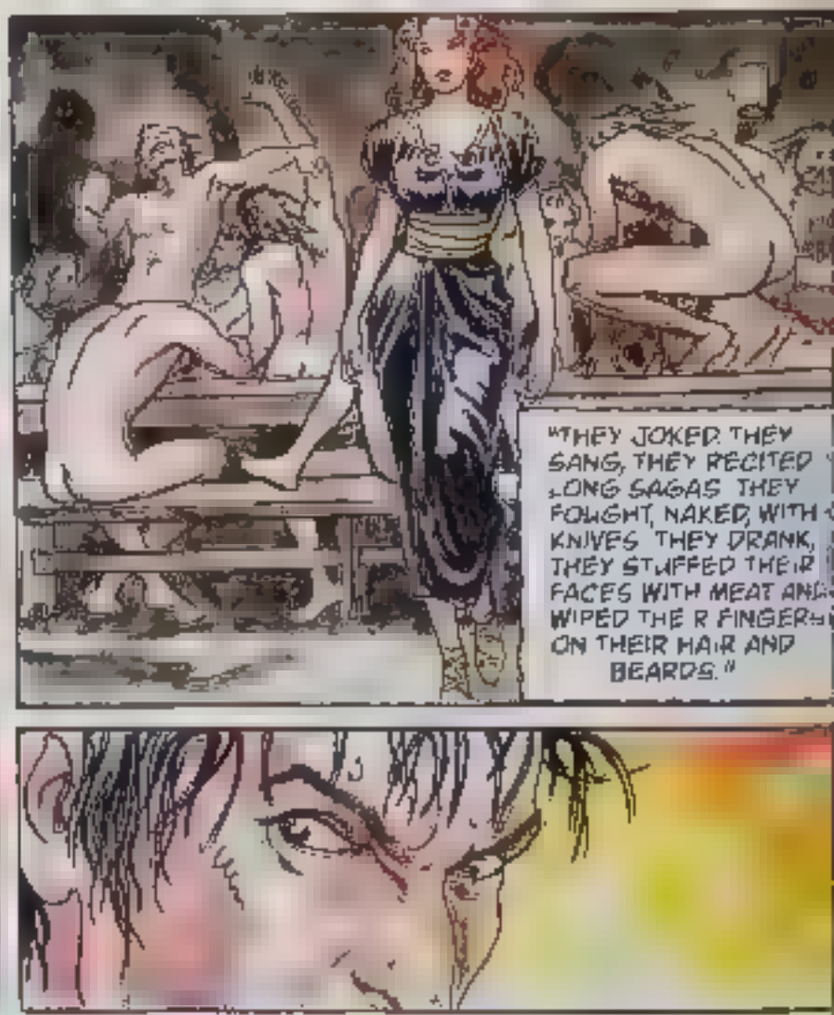

I'LL CARVE
AH, YOU MUST BE THE LEADER VERY WELL YOU MUST CARVE FOR US ALL
I AM AFRAID THAT OUR BARD IS OFF ON WOLF-PATROL WITH THE REST OF THE MEN, BUT I CAN SING TO YOU, IF YOU WISH? THEY SAY MY VOICE IS PLEASANT ENOUGH
SHE SINGS WELL.
AYE DID YOU SEE HOW SHE WAS LOOKING AT ME JUST THEN?
AT YOU? HAVE YOU NO EYES IN YOUR HEAD? T WAS ME SHE SMILED AT.
YOU'RE BOTH MAD! IT'S OBVIOUS WHO SHE WANTS.
HAS SHE SEEN? YOU SA D 'T WAS HER HUSBAND'S HEAD!
T IS! SEE-- THAT'S MY BROTHER'S BAND SHE WEARS ABOUT HER NECK I DON'T UNDER STAND..


NOW, YOU MUST TELL ME WHICH OF YOU IS THE MOST CUNNING IN BATTLE?
I AM!
NO, I AM!


WELL, LET ME SEE YOU WRESTLE. AND FOR THE WINNER ... I'LL HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING NICE.


"I WATCHED THEM WRESTLE AND CURSE, I LISTENED TO THEM BRAG, AND I SMILED AT EACH OF THEM, ADMIRED EACH OF THEM. BUT NEVER TOO MUCH.


"THEIR LUST WOULD HAVE BEEN HARD TO CONTROL BUT THEIR DESIRE ... AT THAT MOMENT, I COULD PLAY DESIRE LIKE A HARP. EACH OF THEM WANTED ME. EACH OF THEM WANTED ME TO WANT HIM...
"TIME PASSED SO QUICKLY.


"THEY JOKED. THEY SANG, THEY RECITED LONG SAGAS. THEY FOUGHT, NAKED, WITH KNIVES. THEY DRANK, THEY STUFFED THEIR FACES WITH MEAT AND WIPED THEIR FINGERS ON THEIR HAIR AND BEARDS."


AND THEN IT WAS DAWN, AND OUR MEN CAME BACK AND SLAUGHTERED THEM LIKE WOLVES
WERE YOU NOT AFRAID?
NO
BUT THEY HAD KILLED YOUR HUSBAND.
YES
I AM HIS WIFE, AND THE LADY OF THIS VILLAGE T WOULD BE A POOR THING IF I COULD NOT BEND A MAN TO MY DESIRE
BURY HIM.


AND THAT WAS WHEN I KNEW I'D NEVER SEE HIS COCKSURE SMILE AGAIN, OR HIS LOPING WALK. AND I KNEW THAT THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT THAT I WANTED.
I'D *HAD* ALL I WANTED, AND IT WAS *GONE*


AND I KNEW THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE I *COULD* WANT AS I HAD WANTED H M. TIME WENT BY, AND THE YEARS, AND THE MONTHS, AND THE DAYS.
I MARRIED AGAIN. A MAN ASKED ME. I COULD THINK OF NO REASON NOT TO. WE HAD CHILDREN. *FINE* CHILDREN.


I WAS ALIVE, THAT ONE NIGHT, HOLDING THOSE MEN IN MY HAND. IF YOU HAVE *NOTHING* LEFT TO *WANT*, THEN YOU JUST *WAIT* UNTIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO *WAIT* FOR. DON'T YOU?

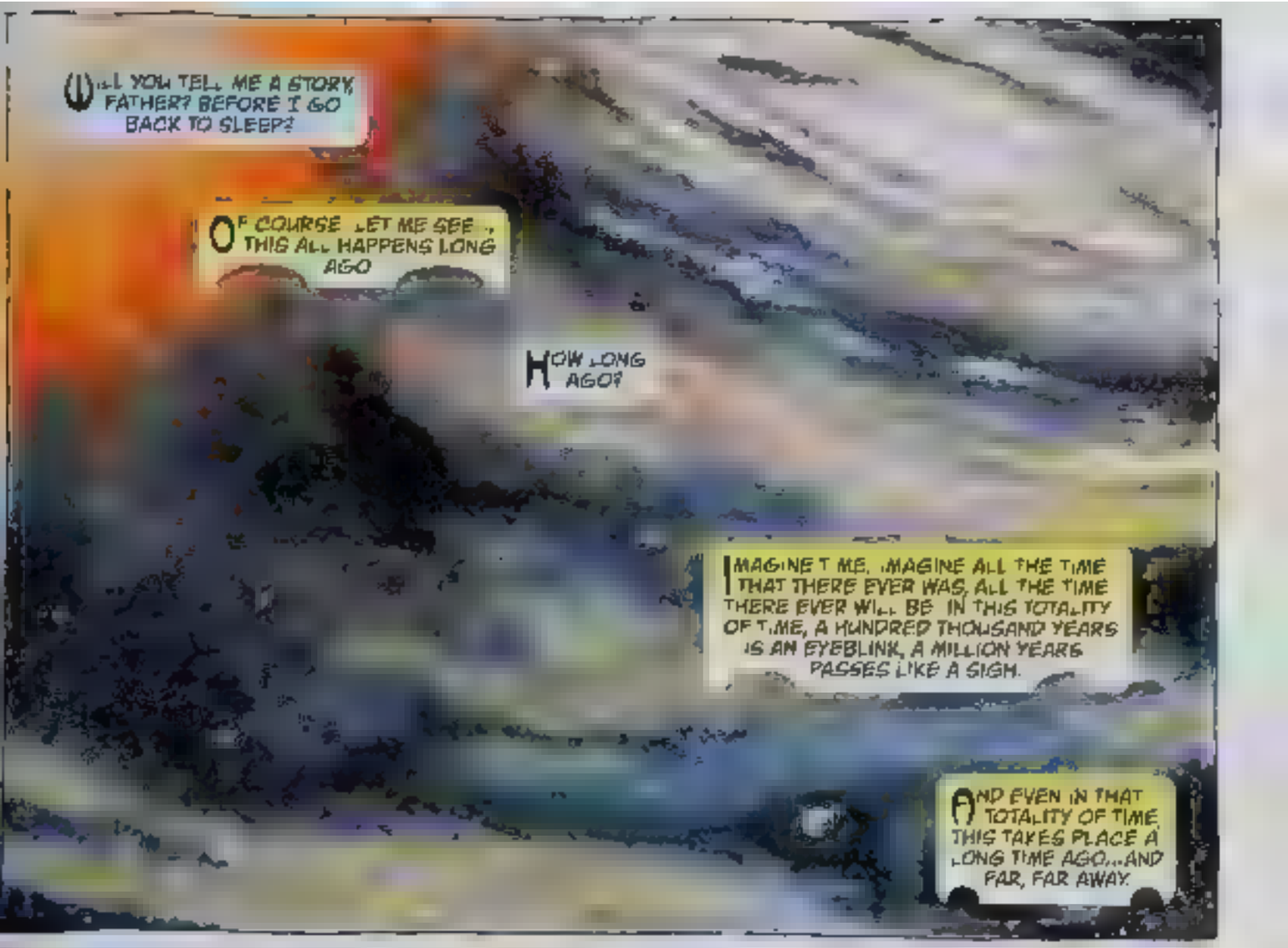

I WATCHED THE CHILDREN GROW TALL. AND LOVE AND WANT, AND I WONDERED IF *THEY* HAD LOVED AS *I* HAD LOVED. IF *ANYONE* EVER HAD


A *LONG* TIME AGO I MET SOMEBODY WITH *GOLDEN EYES*. I WAS TOLD SO *MANY* THINGS. BUT THEY ARE GONE NOW.


AND SOMEBODY SAID. THAT IT BURNED...
...LIKE A FOREST FIRE...

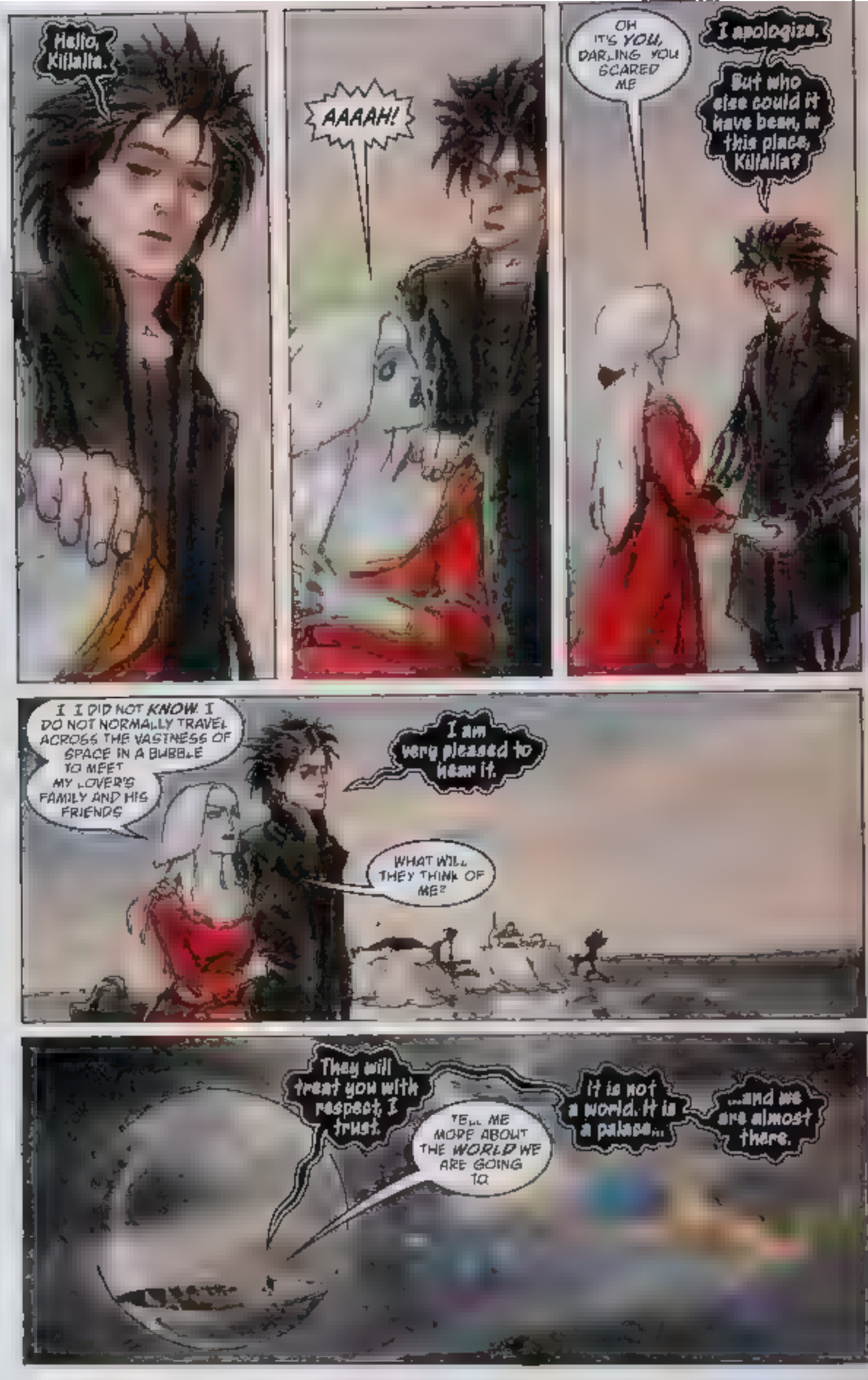

Chapter 3
DREAM
The Heart of a Star
Miguel Ángel

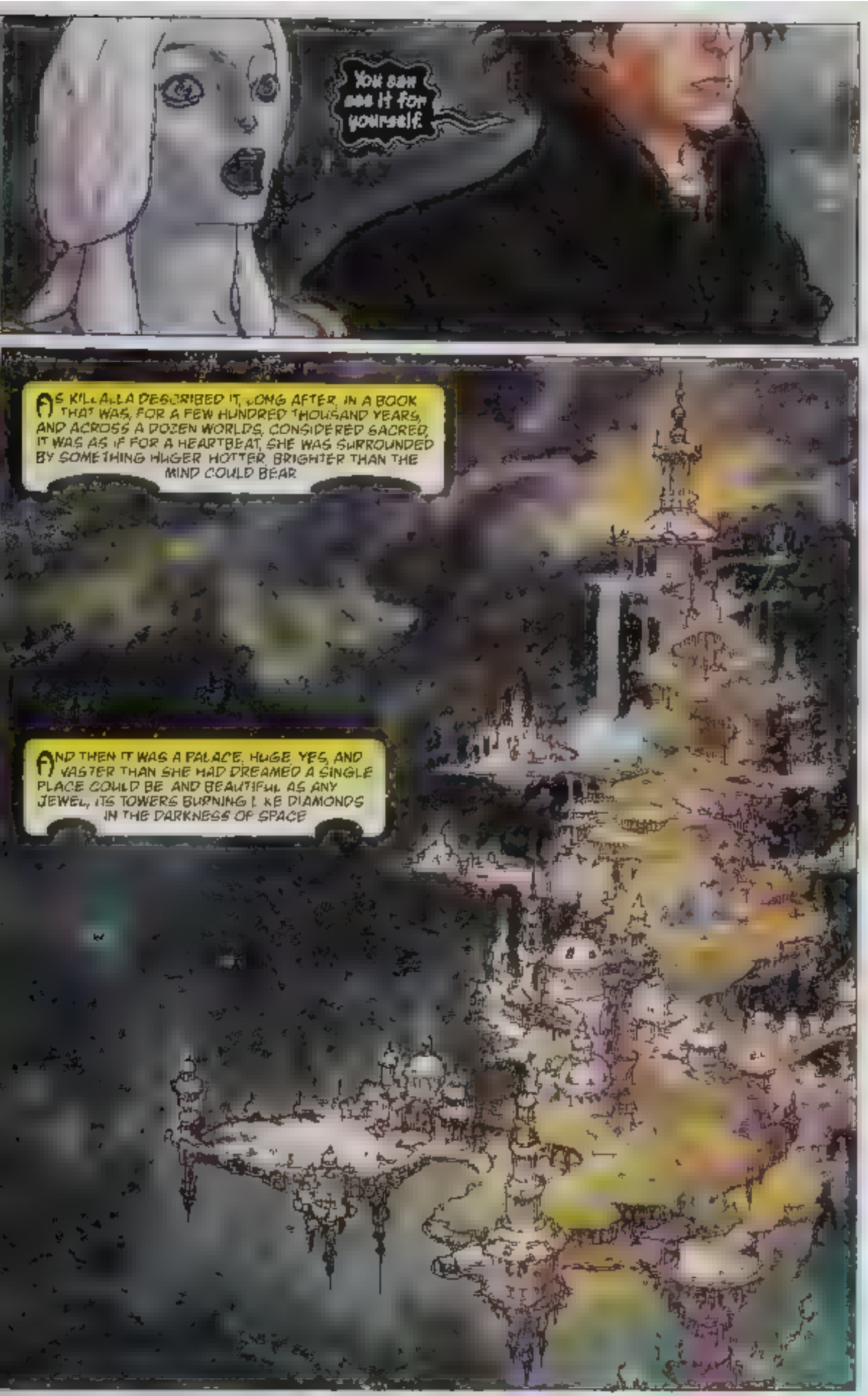

The Heart of a Star
by Miguelanxo Prado


WILL YOU TELL ME A STORY, FATHER? BEFORE I GO BACK TO SLEEP?
OF COURSE. LET ME SEE... THIS ALL HAPPENS LONG AGO
HOW LONG AGO?
IMAGINE ME. IMAGINE ALL THE TIME THAT THERE EVER WAS, ALL THE TIME THERE EVER WILL BE. IN THIS TOTALITY OF TIME, A HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS IS AN EYEBLINK, A MILLION YEARS PASSES LIKE A SIGH.
AND EVEN IN THAT TOTALITY OF TIME, THIS TAKES PLACE A LONG TIME AGO...AND FAR, FAR AWAY.


WHEN KILLALLA OF THE GLOW GETS AGITATED, GREEN FLAMES BEGIN TO FLICKER ABOUT HER BODY
SHE IS AGITATED NOW, AND THE FLAMES ARE LEAPING AND COLDLY BURNING LIKE BRUSHFIRE
THIS IS SILLY!


SHE CONCENTRATES; WITH HER WILL, SHE FORCES THE GREEN FLAME INTO A POINT WHICH DANCES AND BURNS ON HER FINGER-TIP READY TO DO HER BIDDING.


Hello, Kiflalla.
AAAAH!
OH IT'S YOU, DARLING YOU SCARED ME
I apologize.
But who else could it have been, in this place, Kiflalla?
I I DID NOT KNOW. I DO NOT NORMALLY TRAVEL ACROSS THE VASTNESS OF SPACE IN A BUBBLE TO MEET MY LOVER'S FAMILY AND HIS FRIENDS
I am very pleased to hear it.
WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF ME?
They will treat you with respect, I trust.
TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE WORLD WE ARE GOING TO.
It is not a world. It is a palace...
...and we are almost there.


You can see it for yourself.
AS KILLALLA DESCRIBED IT, LONG AFTER, IN A BOOK THAT WAS, FOR A FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS, AND ACROSS A DOZEN WORLDS, CONSIDERED SACRED, IT WAS AS IF FOR A HEARTBEAT, SHE WAS SURROUNDED BY SOMETHING HUGER HOTTER BRIGHTER THAN THE MIND COULD BEAR
AND THEN IT WAS A PALACE, HUGE, YES, AND VASTER THAN SHE HAD DREAMED A SINGLE PLACE COULD BE AND BEAUTIFUL AS ANY JEWEL, ITS TOWERS BURNING LIKE DIAMONDS IN THE DARKNESS OF SPACE


DREAM! YOU ARE MOST WELCOME HERE, AT MY LITTLE PARLIAMENT. YOU HONOR US ALL WITH YOUR ATTENDANCE
AND WHO IS THIS, WHO BRIGHTENS MY HUMBLE HOME WITH HER LOVELY PRESENCE?
This is Lady Kilfalla of the Glow, Mizar.
AN HONOR LADY
Are my family here yet?
NOT ALL OF THEM. DESTRUCTION IS HERE. BUT HE IS IN HIS QUARTERS, AND SO IS DELIGHT. DESIRE HAS BEEN HERE SINCE LAST NIGHT
DESTINY SENDS APOLOGIES, BUT HE WILL NOT BE COMING.
Destiny does not often leave his garden.
But Desire is already here! My love, you must meet Desire. My favorite sibling, if such a thing is possible. So funny and so kind.
DESIRE IS IN THE PLAZA OF MIMIC FLOWERS I SHALL ACCOMPANY YOU THERE
LADY, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EAT OR DRINK OR TOUCH WHATEVER YOU WISH. ANYTHING HERE IS SAFE FOR YOU
ALL THAT IS HERE IS FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT
THANK YOU


Desire.
HELLO, DREAM.
I owe you thanks, my sibling, inadequate thanks, and so much more. How can I ever repay what you have given me?
WELL PERHAPS YOU SHOULD BEGIN BY INTRODUCING US
Of course. This is Lady Killalla of the Glow. From one of the young worlds--here is called On. She is one of the five high (priest-artist-police-entities) of her culture.
Killalla, this is my sister-brother, Desire.
SUCH A PRETTY THING. BLUE SKIN. WHAT A PLEASANT CONCEIT
LORD DREAM ? A MOMENT OF YOUR T ME?
THERE LOOK AT ME, EVERYONE I HAVE BLUE SKIN TOO!
Certainly, Kao. If you two will excuse me, for a moment...?
OF COURSE, BROTHER GO AND DO YOUR SILLY BUSINESS
TELL ME, SWEET GIRL, HOW DID YOU MEET MY BROTHER?
AH. FOR GENERATIONS, MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN STUDYING THE INTERSECTION OF FORCE AND WILL, AND HOW WE COULD HARNESS T, AS LIGHT, TO IMPROVE THE UNIVERSE
WATCH.
WE HOPE THAT ONE DAY WE WILL BE ABLE TO HARNESS THE POWER OF THE GLOW PERFECTLY..
.. AT THIS MOMENT, THE FIVE OF US CONTROL THE GLOW, EXPLORING IT WITH OUR WILL AND OUR HEARTS, US NG IT TO SHOW US THE UNIVERSE..


SOME DAYS AGO, I WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I COMMANDED THE GLOW TO ACCOMPANY ME INTO MY DREAMS--
--AND THEN, IN MY DREAM, YOUR BROTHER APPEARED
OF COURSE HE DID.
WHY WOULD HE THANK YOU FOR... FOR THE WAY WE MET?
BECAUSE HE WANTED YOU. WELL HE WANTED SOMEONE. HE WAS LONELY BECAUSE YOU WANTED HIM
BECAUSE HE BELIEVES THAT I DID HIM A FAVOR.
WHAT LOVELY ROOMS! SO BEAUTIFUL. HOW OLD IS THIS PLACE, MY SWEET?
A day. Two at most.
Mizar made it for the conference. Once the conference is done, it will dissolve into pure light and cosmic dust.
SHE MADE THIS?
WHEN I THINK OF THE ENERGY AND THE CONCENTRATION IT TAKES TO MAKE ONE SMALL THOUGHTFORM. AND TO MAINTAIN T
Mizar has power to spare.
They are about to start...
SHOULD I ATTEND THIS PARLIAMENT?
I would not advise it. It is a deathly dull business, chiefly concerning zones of responsibility and the merits of obligation. But you should attend the gathering at the fountains.


1
WHAT A MAGNIFICENT PLACE!
RAO! EVERYONE, THIS IS RAO - MY FAVORITE RED GIANT!
HOW DID YOU GET THE ENDLESS TO YOUR PARLIAMENT, MIZAR?
PERSISTENCE, MOSTLY. I DECIDED SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND PULSES BACK THAT WE NEEDED TO CONFER TO SET BOUNDS. AND AFTER THAT IT WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF FOLLOWING UP TRYING TO KEEP IT EXCLUSIVE. YET BRING THE PERFECT MIX OF BEINGS TOGETHER
I-I'M SORRY. REALLY AWFULLY...OH DEAR I DIDN'T MEAN TO
HE'S ONE OF YOUR PERFECT MIX?
HE'S VERY, VERY YOUNG. HE'S CALLED SOL. HE MAKES ME LAUGH, AND HE MEANS WELL


I WAS INVITED I HAVE COME MAKE OF THAT WHAT YOU WILL
WE ARE HONORED, LADY
I AM MAKING YOU UN COMFORTABLE
NO, LADY NOT AT ALL
I SHALL LEAVE DECIDE WHAT YOU LIKE AT YOUR PARLIAMENT T S ALL ONE TO ME I WON'T MAKE A LOT OF DIFFERENCE N THE LONG RUN, WILL IT?
ONE BY ONE. YOU WILL ALL COME TO ME
It begins. Feel free to walk the gardens. You can return to our rooms merely by wishing it.
YOU MEAN ALL I HAVE TO DO IS...


M
WHAT ARE YOU?
I AM CALLED KILLALLA OF THE GLOW
YOU ARE VERY PRETTY AND YOU HAVE A NICE NAME BUT WHAT ARE YOU?
HOW DO YOU MEAN, WHAT AM I?
WELL I MEAN WHAT I MEAN IS WHAT ARE YOU?
LIKE, UM, ARE YOU A SUPERINTELLIGENT COSMIC CLOUD FORMATION, OR A DIMENSION THAT HAS INCARNATED LIKE THAT OR A STAR OR WHAT?
I'M...I'M A FEMALE THAT MEANS I BEAR THE YOUNG OF MY SPECIES I COME FROM A PLANET CALLED OA I AM
YOU MEAN YOU REALLY ARE JUST WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE YOU ARE.
YES
WELL THAT'S PRETTY NEED WHY ARE YOU HERE THEN? DO YOU OWN THE MILKY WAY OR SOMETHING?
NO I'M HERE WITH DREAM OF THE ENDLESS I'M HIS COMPANION
OH.
OOPS.
I
OOOOHHHH I'M SORRY. I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED. I AM SO EMBARRASSED I THINK I'M JUST GOING TO HIDE UNDER THE TABLE UNTIL I'M NOT EMBARRASSED ANY MORE
DON'T BE SILLY.


PLEASE, COME OUT OF THERE
IN A MINUTE
ARE YOU HIS GIRL-FRIEND?
I I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE
I THOUGHT YOU WERE HERE ON BUSINESS.
NO HE JUST WANTED ME TO MEET HIS FAMILY. I MET DESIRE ALREADY
AND YOU MET ME, TOO. I M DELIGHT.
HOW DO YOU DO?
I I M NOT CERTAIN. I THINK I DO OKAY. HAVE THEY STARTED TALKING? THE PEOPLE AT THE THINGIE?
I BEL EVE SO
I SHOULD GO THERE YOU KNOW WHAT THEY WILL BE SAYING? BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH THAT'S WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO SAY.
BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH.
OKAY, I WE'

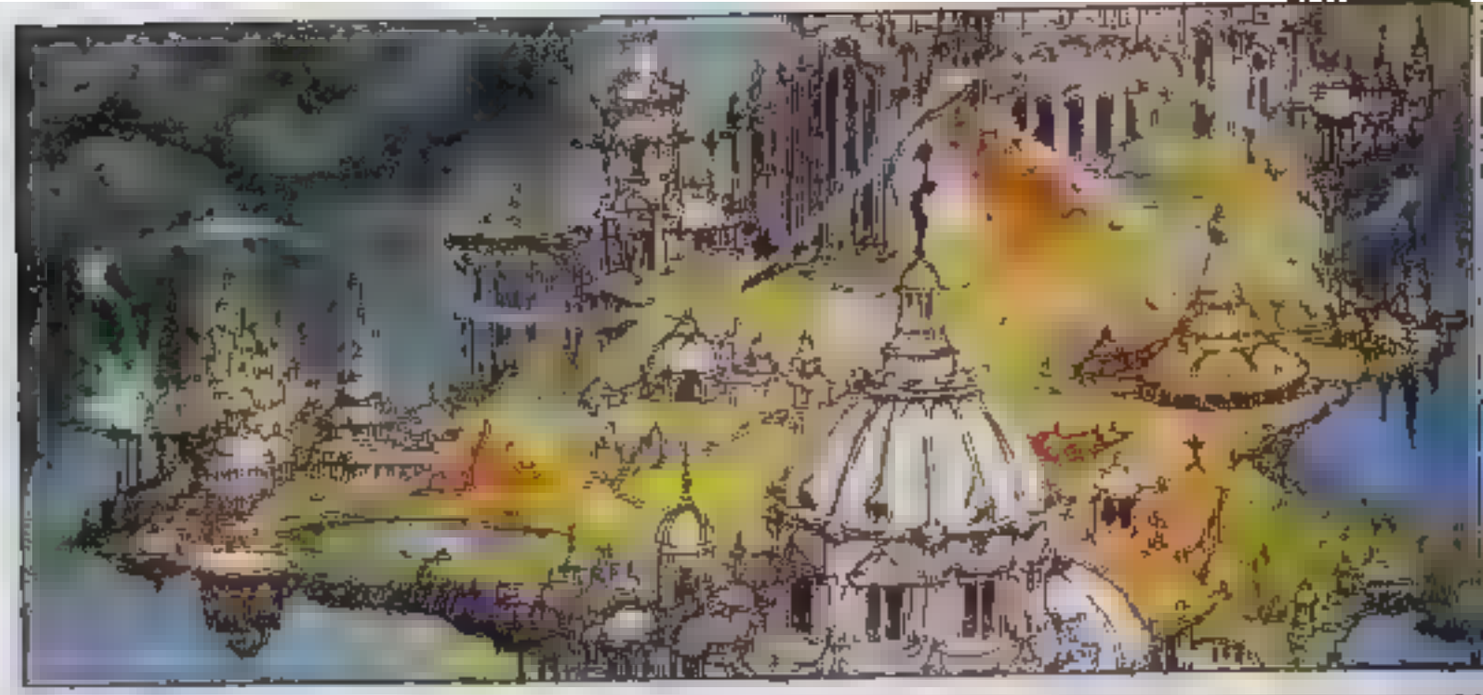

LA LALA LA
GREETINGS, LADY
HELLO MIZAR
I THOUGHT YOU PEOPLE WERE HAVING YOUR MEETING
THE MEETING HAS BEEN MOMENTARILY SUSPENDED, ON A POINT OF ORDER
I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE A DIMENSION OR NOT. IF YOU'RE TOO SMALL TO BE PERCEIVED, THEN I DON'T THINK YOU GET TO ADDRESS THE ASSEMBLY
IT'S NOT A SIZE THING, IT'S A MATTER OF PERCEPTION AND RESPECT.
YOU SHOULD COME AND LISTEN. YOU MIGHT FIND IT INTERESTING
YOU HAVE MET YOUR ...DREAMS BROTHER, DESTRUCTION? HIS IS THE PROCESS THAT FUELS ALL THE STARS WITHOUT HIM, ALL WOULD BE LIFELESS AND DARK
NO. WE HAVE NOT MET. I AM KILLALLA OF THE GLOW
A LOVELY THING INDEED! I HOPE MY BROTHER KNOWS WHAT HE HAS N YOU. WE HAD ALL HOPED THAT HE MIGHT FIND SOMEONE TO SHARE HIS EXISTENCE WITH. NDEED, DESIRE UNDERTOOK-
NO, I SPEAK OUT OF TURN
THE HEARTS OF STARS MAY BE MY DOMAIN, BUT EVEN THE HEARTS OF STARS NO, AGAIN, I MISSPEAK I AM NOT ONE FOR FINE WORDS, OR PRECISE WORDS. LET ME CLARIFY, LITTLE ONE
GREAT ONES? A COMPROMISE HAS BEEN REACHED IT BEGINS ONCE MORE
THANK YOU, SOL

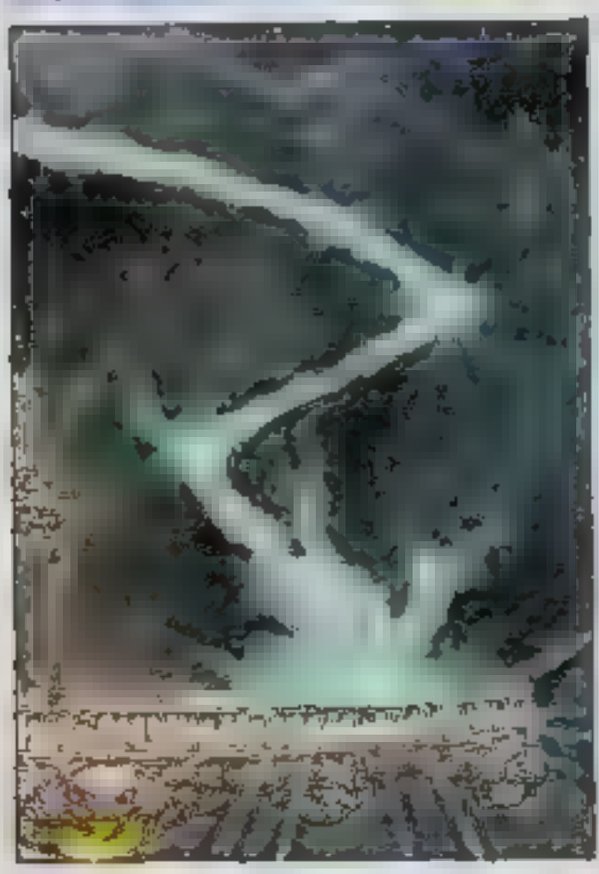

WILL YOU ANSWER ME A QUESTION, KILLALLA OF THE GLOW?
SHOULD I ..KNOW YOU?
NOT EXACTLY. I AM DREAM'S OLDER BROTHER. SOME CALL ME DESTINY.
OH.
CAN I GET YOU SOMETHING TO EAT?
I SHALL NOT BE HERE FOR LONG
YOU ARE BLIND.
YES.


WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO MAKE YOU EYES, WITH THE GLOW?
THIS PLACE IS SO BEAUTIFUL. T S SUCH A SHAME YOU NEVER SEE NG T
I THANK YOU. BUT NO.
KILLALLA, DO YOU LOVE MY BROTHER?
I DO NOT KNOW. I THINK SO.
YOU ARE A MORTAL WOMAN.
MILLENNIA FROM NOW, IT WILL BE DECIDED THAT THE ENDLESS MAY NOT LOVE MORTALS. YOU WILL BE DISCUSSED AND REMEMBERED AND TALKED ABOUT MANY TIMES IN THOSE DISCUSSIONS.
HE LOVES ME?
HE LOVES ME!


THE WAY I SEE IT NOW, FAER E WON'T BE A DIMENSION SO MUCH AS AN ASPIRATION. DO YOU SEE?
MM. WILL T BE TIED TO ANY PARTICULAR SUN-SYSTEM?
NOT AS SUCH IT WILL NEED A CERTAIN QUALITY OF LIGHT ONE SIMPLY CANNOT GET FROM YOUR PEOPLE
YOU KNOW, I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY PLANETS. WELL, I DO, BUT THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP NOTHING THAT HOLDS LIFE
BUT I WAS THINKING THAT MAYBE WHEN THEY WAKE AND MAKE LIFE, I THOUGHT, A DOMINANT LIFE-FORM COULD LOOK LIKE YOU.
YOU HAVE SUCH GRACE
THANK YOU, SOL- ER I THINK
KILLALLA! KILLALLA OF THE GLOW! SOL, YOU DON'T MIND IF I INTRUDE?
I'VE BEEN WANTING TO TALK TO YOU FOR THE WHOLE OF THE CONFER ENCE
ER...
YOU KNOW ME?
OF COURSE I DO! DON'T YOU KNOW ME? YOU ARE ONE OF MY FAVORITE PEOPLE
YOU DO SEEM FAMILIAR...
...LIKE SOMEONE I'VE KNOWN ALL MY LIFE
WELL I SHOULD HOPE SO.
YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN WALKING AROUND HERE FOR ..FOR HOWEVER LONG IT'S BEEN, SMILING AND NODDING, AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT ANYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT
THEY KEEP TALKING ABOUT STARS AND DIMENSIONS AND GALAXIES, AND MY ..MY LOVER'S FAMILY.
YOU MEAN YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW?
DOES EACH OF YOU REPRESENT THE PEOPLE FROM A DIFFERENT STAR SYSTEM, OR SOMETHING... IS IT A PARTY, OR A BUSINESS MEETING OR A CONFERENCE OR WHAT?
WELL, YES, IT'S ALL OF THOSE THINGS. BUT,


LOOK, YOU SEEM NICE ENOUGH. WILL YOU ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS FOR ME? JUST GIVE ME SOME STRAIGHT ANSWERS?
CERTAINLY.
WHY WAS EVERYONE AFRAID OF HIS OLDER SISTER? THE PRETTY ONE? THEY WOULDN'T TALK TO HER OR ANYTHING
BECAUSE IN THE END, EACH SUN, EACH WORLD, EVERY GALAXY, WILL COLLAPSE AND END, EITHER INTO FLAME OR INTO DARKNESS AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, SHE WILL BE THERE, FOR EACH OF US. NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
NOT REALLY
SHE IS DEATH
OH
YOU MEAN...SHE'S THE GODDESS OF DEATH, OR THE INCARNATION, OR
NO. SHE IS DEATH. JUST AS THAT ONE IS DESIRE OR YOUR LOVER IS DREAM
OF COURSE HE IS DREAM. I MET HIM IN THE KINGDOM OF DREAMS, AND HE FOLLOWED ME BACK. HE'S THE KING THERE...
NO, KILLALLA, HE IS NOT THE KING. HE IS DREAM. JUST AS I AM STO-OA
THAT'S A SILLY NAME. THAT'S WHAT CHILDREN CALL THE SUN ON THE WORLD WHERE I COME FROM. "THE LIGHT OF OA."
JUST BECAUSE A NAME IS USED BY THE YOUNG DOESN'T MAKE IT FOOLISH. I AM THE LIGHT OF OA, AFTER ALL, AM I NOT? I SHINE ON ALL OA, KILLALLA. SINCE YOU WERE A BABE, I GAVE MY LIGHT TO YOU.
N-NO
NO! YOU ARE NOT!






KILLALLA.


WE ARE THE STARS. WE DO NOT REPRESENT THEM. WE ARE THEM.
'TIS NOT..


BUT HOW--
NO DON'T TELL ME 'TIS TOO BIG, EVEN TO THINK OF I MEAN, YOU'RE A STAR? A SUN? MY SUN?


YOUR SUN, IF YOU'LL HAVE ME. KILLALLA.


I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
I THINK .. I THINK HE SAW US.
WHY SHOULD THAT SCARE YOU? YOU ARE A SUN.
I AM A SUN, CERTA NLY BUT HE IS DREAM. THEY SAY DEATH IS K NDER THAN HE IS
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
I DON'T KNOW.
DON'T LEAVE ME
I NEVER SHALL


THINK ABOUT T'RAQ. WOULDN'T BRINGING LIFE ONTO A PLANET THAT IS INHERENTLY UNSTABLE ADD TO THE BEAUTY OF THE LIFE? IF AT ANY MOMENT IT COULD EXPLODE
I HAD NOT THOUGHT OF IT LIKE THAT
NO?
TRULY, IT WOULD ONLY BE PERFECTLY BEAUTIFUL A PERFECT PIECE OF ART, IF ONE SINGLE LIFE-FORM ESCAPED TO REMEMBER TO MOURN, TO DESPAIR
YES, LADY
IT IS GOOD
Where is Desire, my sister?
THERE BY THE POOL
Thank you.
Kiliaila of the Glow is with Eto-Ou.
YES
They were kissing.
THEY WERE. THEY'VE GONE FAR BEYOND THAT NOW. HIS HOT FINGERS ARE ALREADY INVADING HER SOFT CURVES AND MOIST CREVICES--
Enough!
You find this funny?
ACTUALLY, YES.
I see. Then we are not friends, you and I, Sibling. Not any longer. Do not interfere further in my affairs.
I WAS A JOKE
DOESN'T HE HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR?
NOT THAT I'VE EVER NOTICED

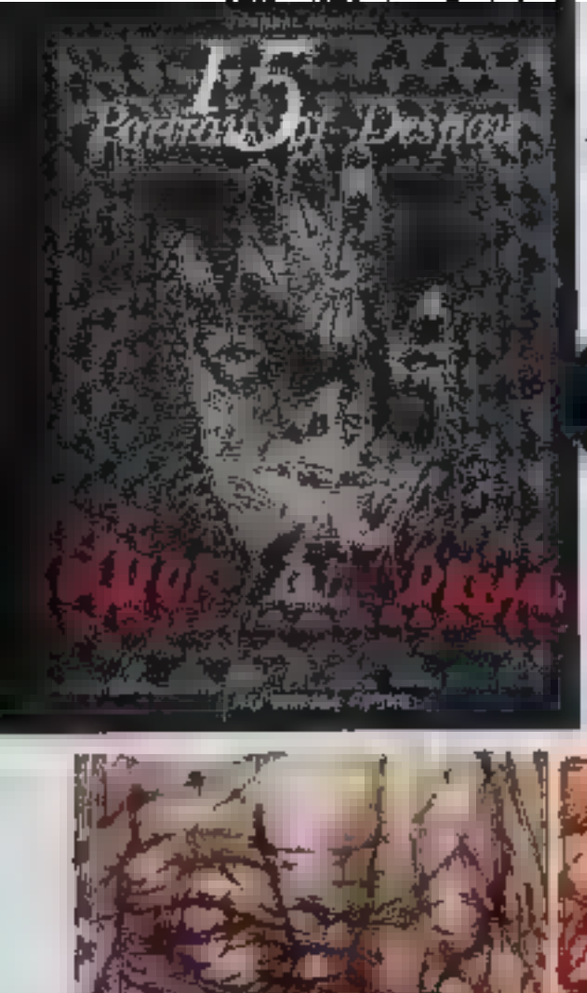

Miar?
YES, SIRE
I have outstayed my welcome, and I shall be leaving now.
THE WOMAN YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU...?
Will find her own way home. I imagine that Sto-Oa will transport her; they are going to the same place, after all.
You, Sol. Did I hear you say you planned to have some of your planets inhabited?
WELL, I'D CERTAINLY *LIKE* T OBVIOUSLY 'TIS UP TO THE PLANETS THEMSELVES NONE OF THEM HAVE WOKEN YE?
Yes. Their dreams are very lonely, and beautiful.
YOU *KNOW* THAT? OH OF *COURSE* YOU DO YOU KNOW, SIRE YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN MY SYSTEM
I know, Sol. One day...
ND WITH THAT, HE WAS GONE

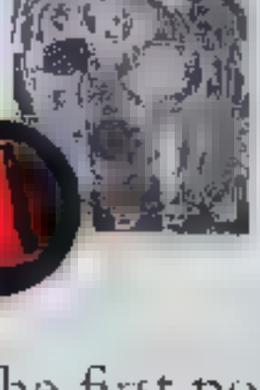

HE KNEW YOUR NAME FATHER?
YES, CHILD.
WHEN I HAVE LIFE ACTUALLY WALKING AND DANCING AND DREAMING ON MY SURFACE, WILL THE ENDLESS COME TO ME. PROPERLY? WILL DREAM BE THERE?
YES
POOR DREAM AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HER? TO KILLALLA OF THE GLOW?
SHE DIED, AS THEY ALL DIE. THEY DO NOT LIVE LONG BUT SHE MADE STO-OA HAPPY, FOR A MOMENT, AND ON HER DEATH HE TRANSLATED HER INTO HIS CENTER, TO BURN INSIDE THE HEART OF THE STAR AND COMFORT HIM THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT
THAT'S GOOD POOR STO-OA POOR KILLALLA.
GO BACK TO SLEEP, MY DAUGHTER REST AWHILE ..
SLEEP UNTIL LIFE WAKES YOU.

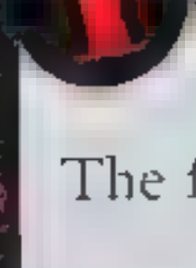

DESPAIR
DESPAIR
Fifteen
Portraits
of Despair
art by
Barron Storey
designed by
Dave McKean

15 Portraits of Desire

For Barron Storey







The first portrait



Her eyes are grey



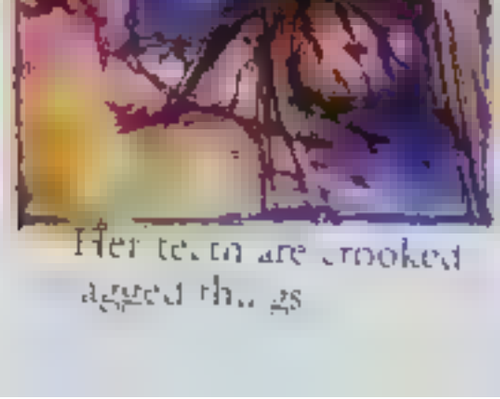
Her [illegible] straggly and wet



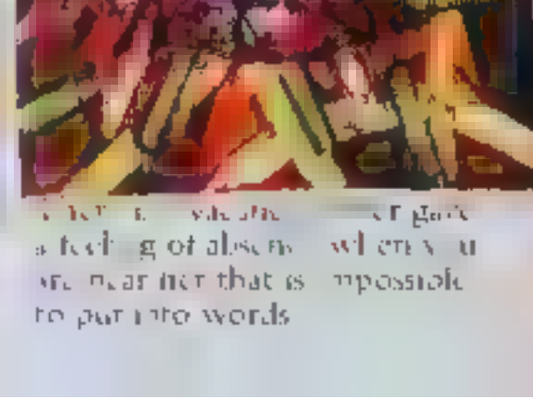
Her fingers are stubby



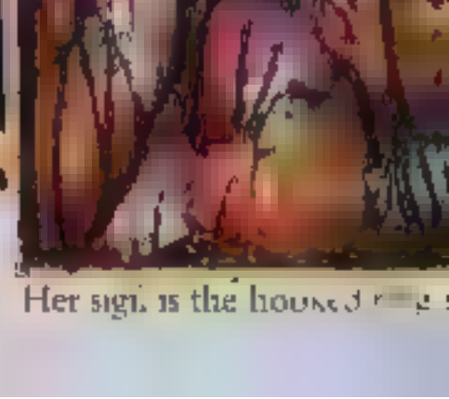
Her nails are chewed and broken



Her teeth are crooked jagged things

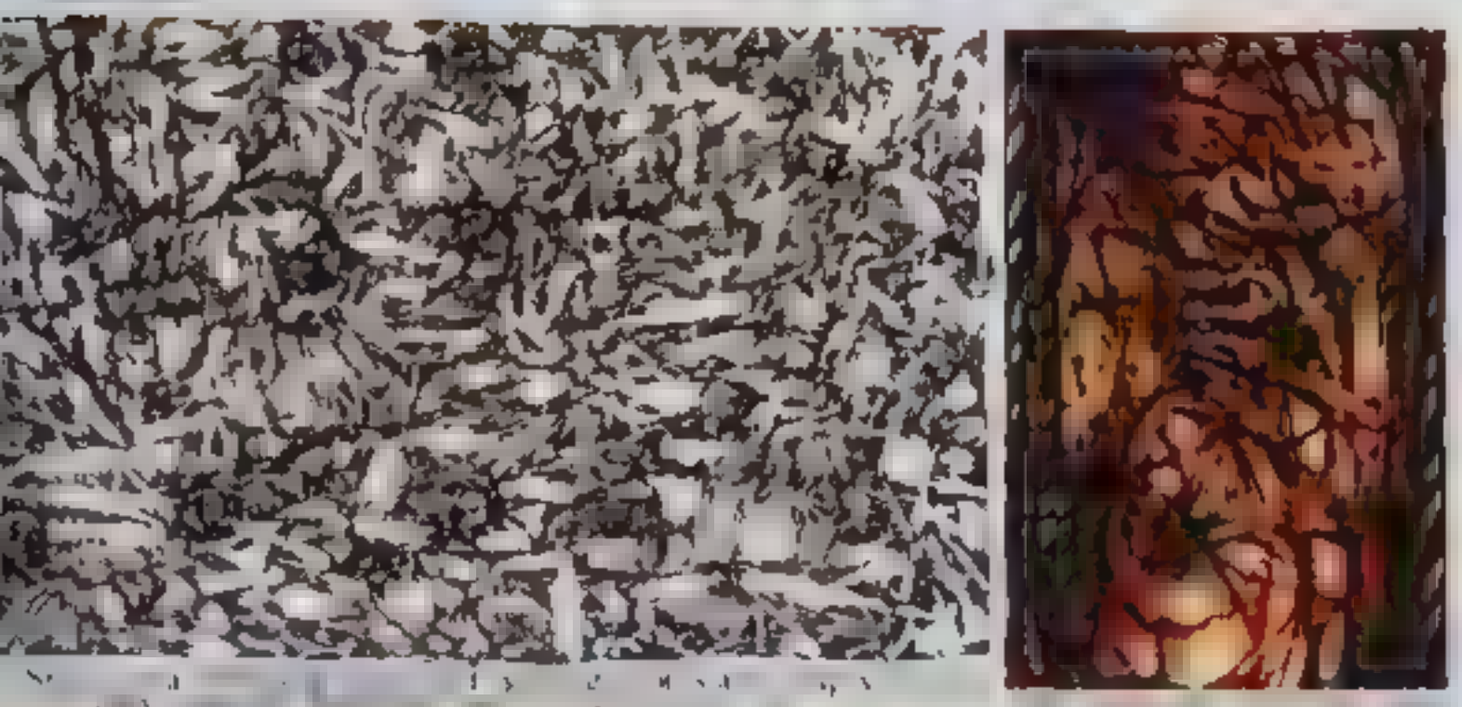


[illegible] a feeling of absence near her that is impossible to put into words



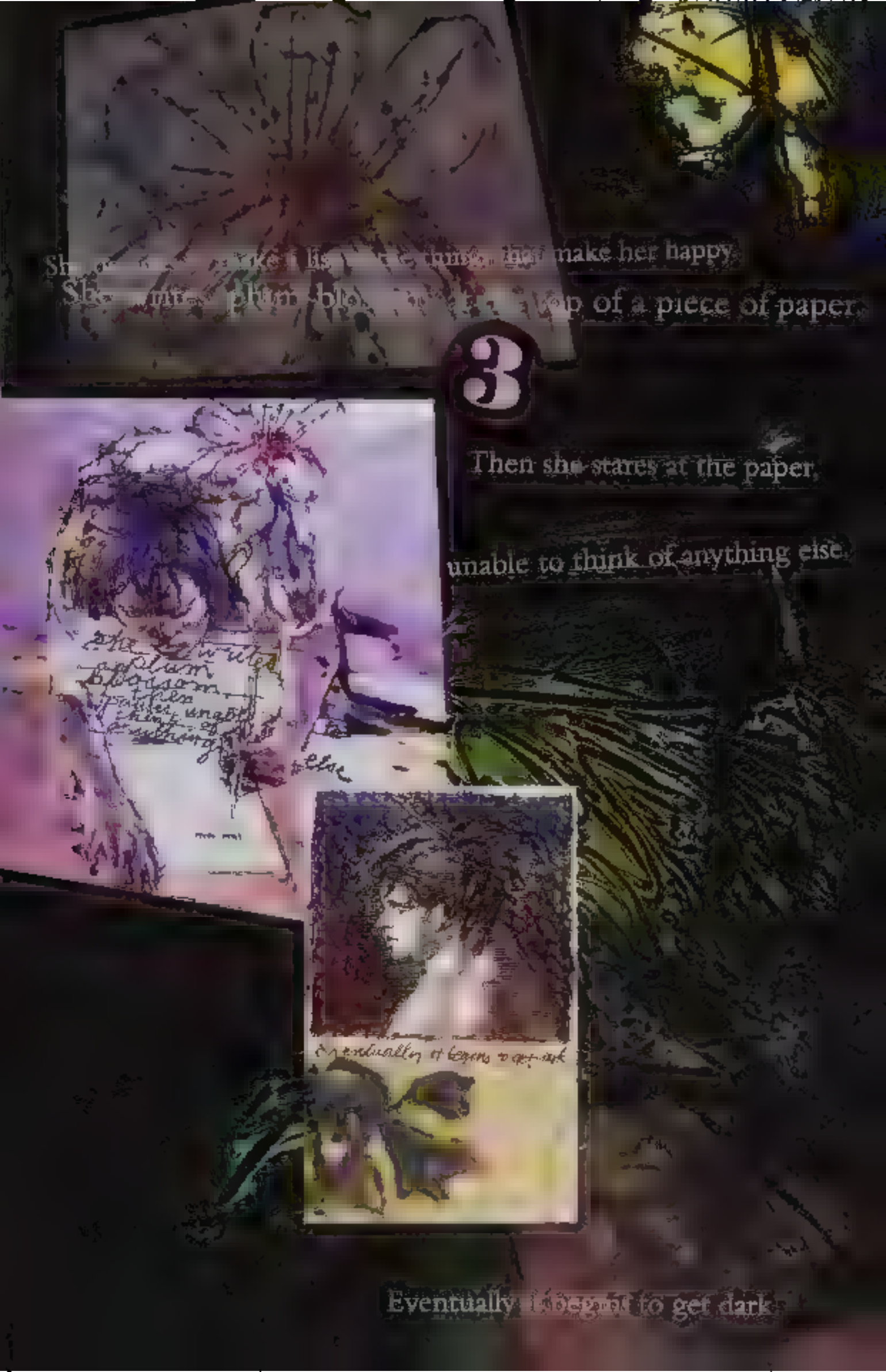
Her sight is the housed [illegible]

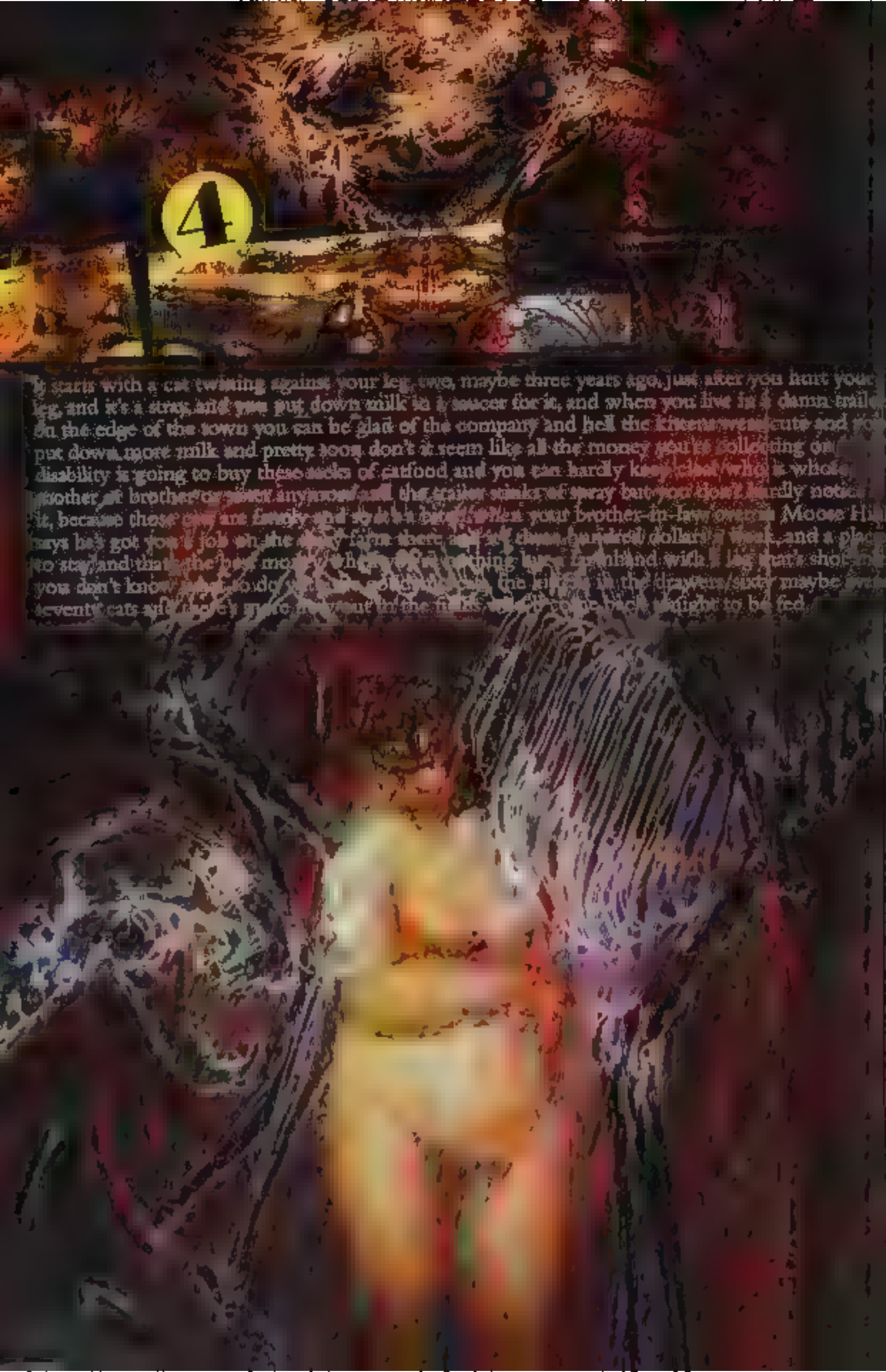






2
I told him I never
I could prove it too.
even after
all this time


make her happy
of a piece of paper.
3
Then she stares at the paper,
unable to think of anything else.
Eventually it begins to get dark.


4
It starts with a cat twining against your leg, two, maybe three years ago, just after you hurt your
leg, and it's a stray, and you put down milk in a saucer for it, and when you live in a damn trail
on the edge of the town you can be glad of the company and hell the kitten was cute and yo
put down more milk and pretty soon don't it seem like all the money you're collecting on
disability is going to buy these sacks of catfood and you can hardly keep about who is whose
mother or brother or sister anymore and the stale stink of spray but you don't hardly notice
it, because these cats are family and so is the baby when your brother-in-law owns a Moose Hu
marys he's got you a job on the [illegible] from there and [illegible] dollars a week and a pla
to stay and that's the best [illegible] you're drinking [illegible] with [illegible] last year's shot
you don't know [illegible] do [illegible] the [illegible] in the drawers/sister maybe
seventy cats and [illegible] more [illegible] the [illegible] daughter to be fed.

Be here Friday says your brother or else he'll go somewhere else to
And that disability won't last forever



So you lock the trailer door and you go through the motions of coming back at the weekend to feed the cats, and knowing that you won't

And then there's just the face of the sheriff's man as he tells you that they have warrants to go into the trailer that five of them cats were somehow to blame that every bowl was more were found part eaten and he waits for you to say something and you shake your head and you don't say nothing at all

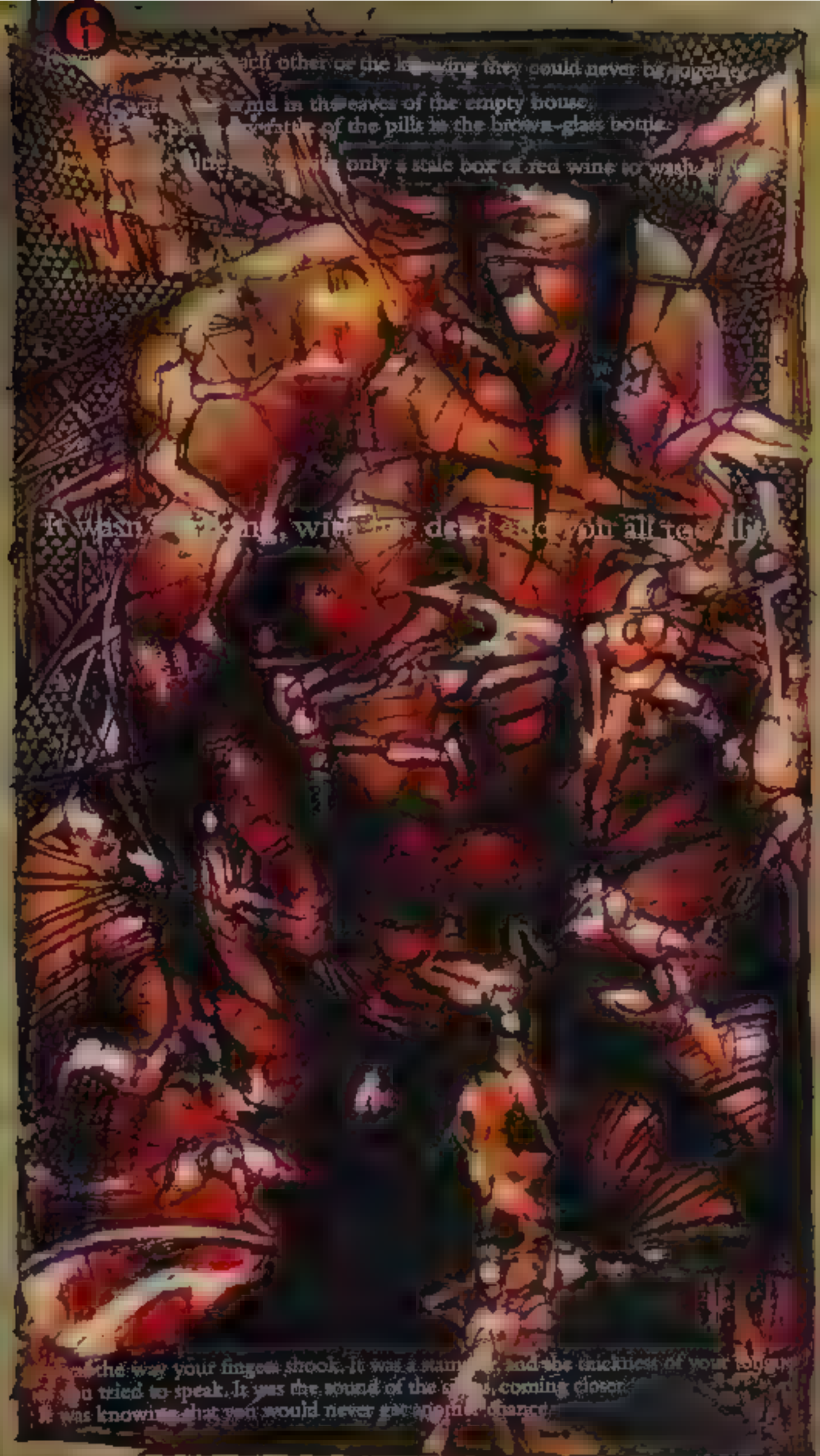
5 He collects his lover.







He [illegible] photographs he has [illegible] journeys they took together [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]



"Dentist" with dolls

Despair remembers

It is a peculiar, flat memory
in which things become bleak and bounded by the dark



There is joy in there
of course
and love
and touching
The presence that makes the
present absence unbearable

Without triumph
without love
without joy
her work would be for nothing



To begin with, he lost his job.
It was not his fault
It was an honest mistake
You must believe me



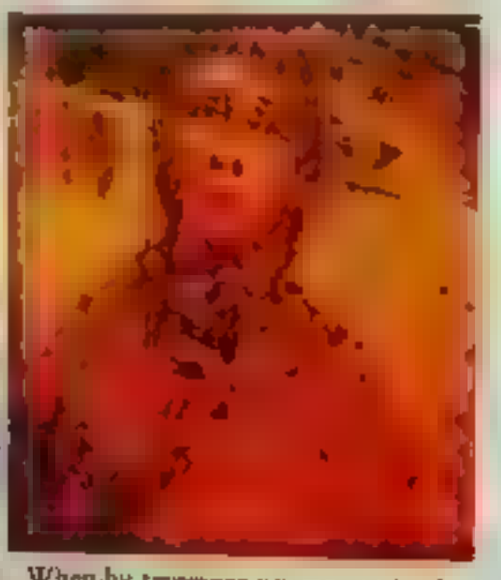
It was shame, then, not despair that moved him
Each day he got up and showered and dressed,
he kissed his wife and babies, and drove away



He spent the day in corridors
or in the parked car, or walking.



He applied for jobs
and was turned down



When his severance pay ran out he slowly
methodically emptied his savings accounts
He told his wife he had been promoted



The first break-in was easy
A weekend jewellery
No one was home
No one was hurt
It was practically a victimless crime

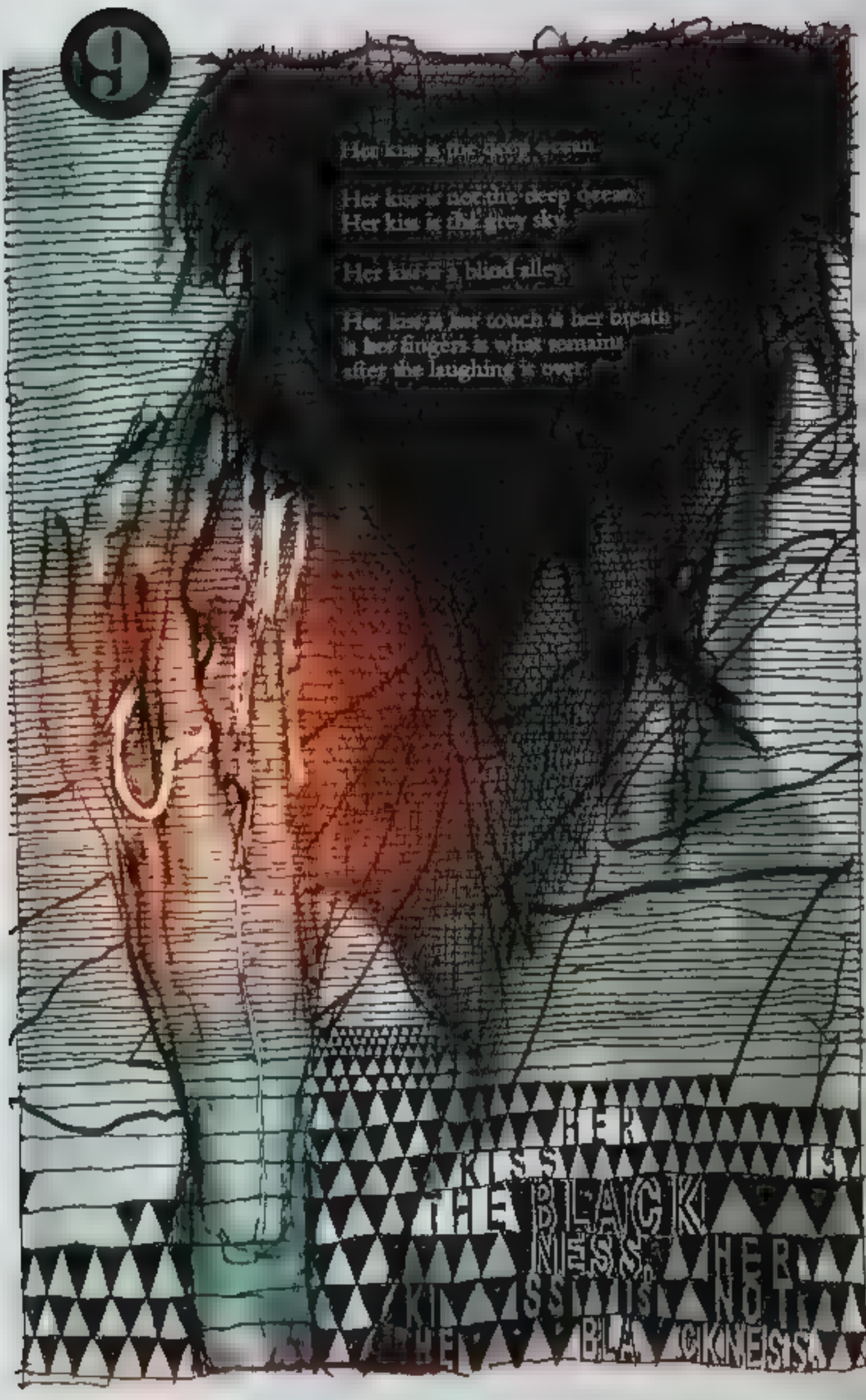


Today his wife said that the police
had been by asking after him
She told them that he was at work
and they said that was odd
that they thought he'd been fired

He didn't tell the people make it easier
That new girl at the switchboard
But he wasn't feeling well
He thought he'd stay home today

Now he's at his bedroom
in his empty house
listening to someone pressing the doorbell
And he will
Watch it ring
And ring
And ring




9
Her kiss is the deep ocean
Her kiss is not the deep ocean
Her kiss is the grey sky
Her kiss is a blind alley
Her kiss is her touch is her breath
is her fingers is what remains
after the laughing is over
HER KISS IS THE BLACKNESS
HER KISS IS NOT THE BLACKNESS


WITH THIS PAIN
I THEE FEEL
Her kiss is the black dog that follows you in the darkness
There is a black dog beneath the grey sky
by the blind alley beside the deep ocean
It is not her kiss. Come closer


10

It is a writer, with nothing left that he knows how to say



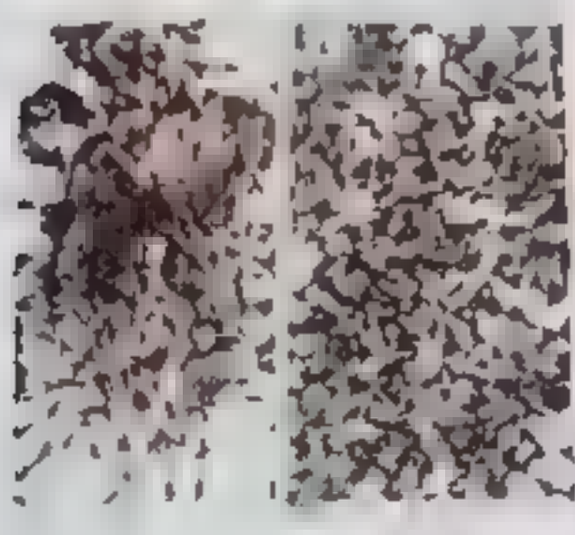
It is an artist, and fingers that will never catch the vision.



12

He was not a rich man, and it took all he could raise from his fields, his house, his friends, to take the man to court He has mortgaged his future for fairness, for relief, for Justice. What happened to his child was not right









And now the judge comes out and his mouth opens and he explains the verdict, his words a tangle of legalities



'What does he say?' the man asks his lawyer.





by the smiles in the eyes of his opponent. It is the same smile he see[illegible] lawyers on the other side. On the face of the judge

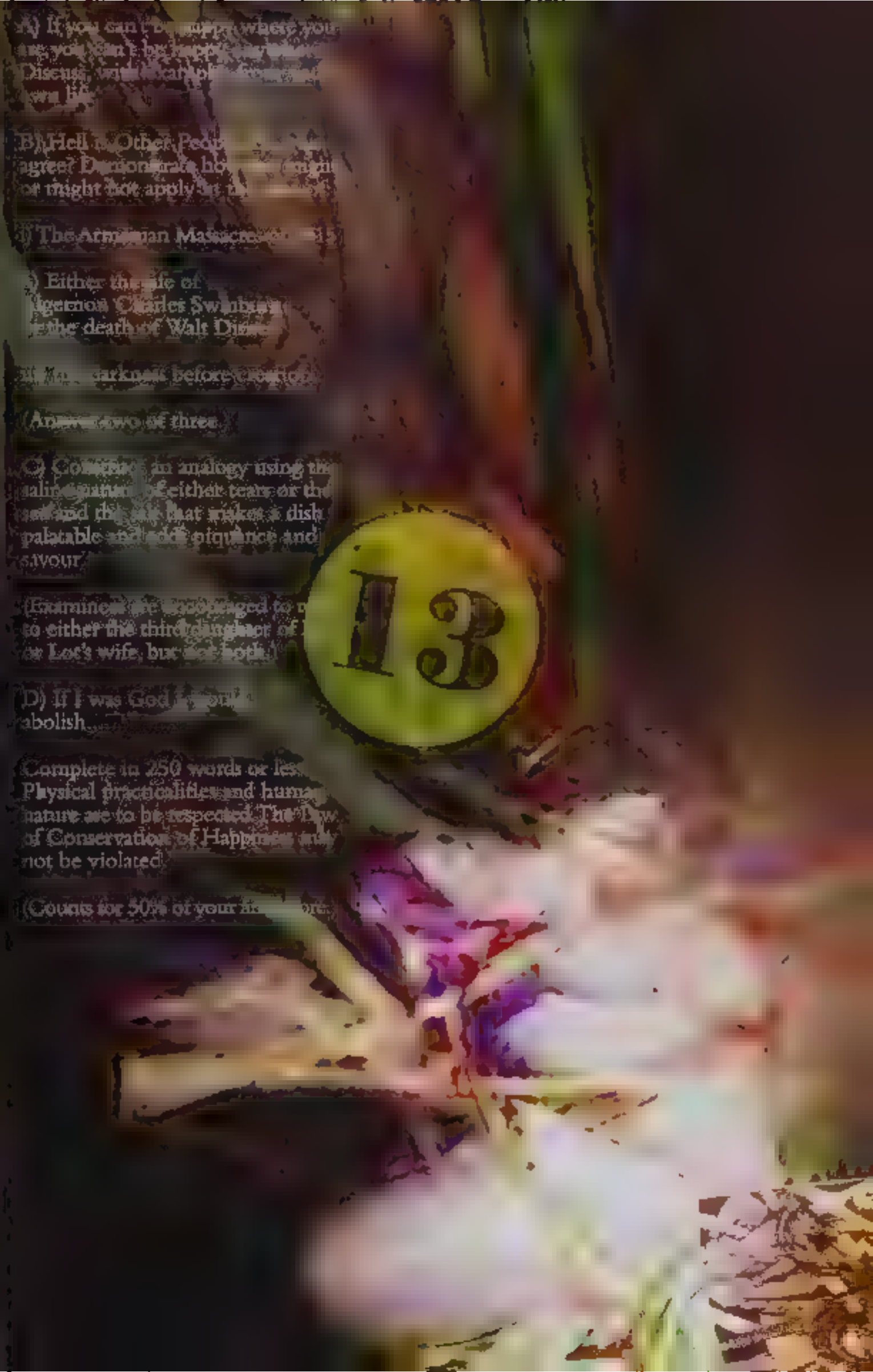
He feels his lawyer's hand on his arm and [illegible] it has only just begun







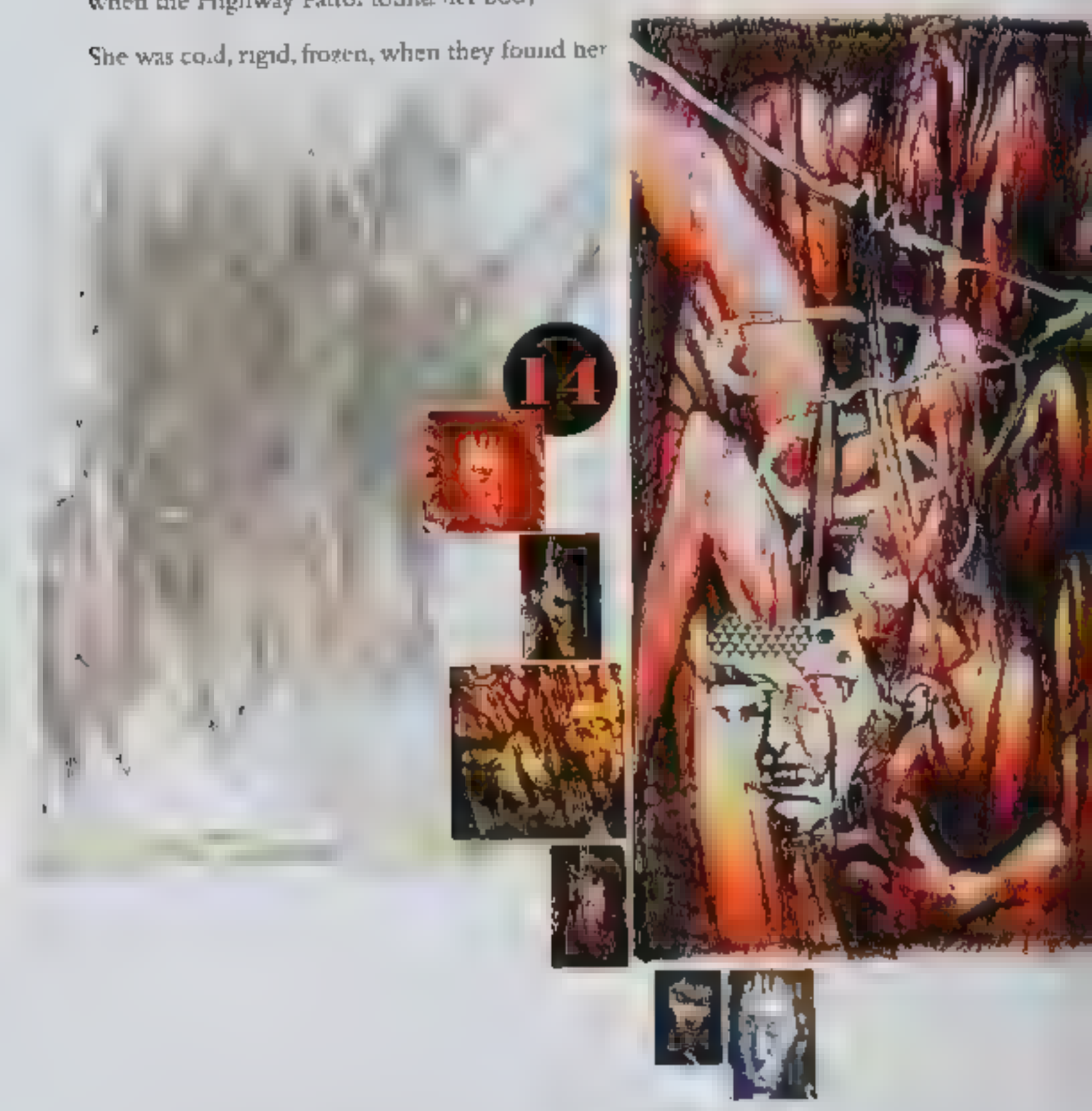

WHERE
WHERE
WHERE


13

She had waited until her husband and children were away and had driven into the snowy woods, and ended it. Just let it all go.

She had wanted the pain to stop. The heart hurt. She slept her way into death, only waking when the Highway Patrol found her body.

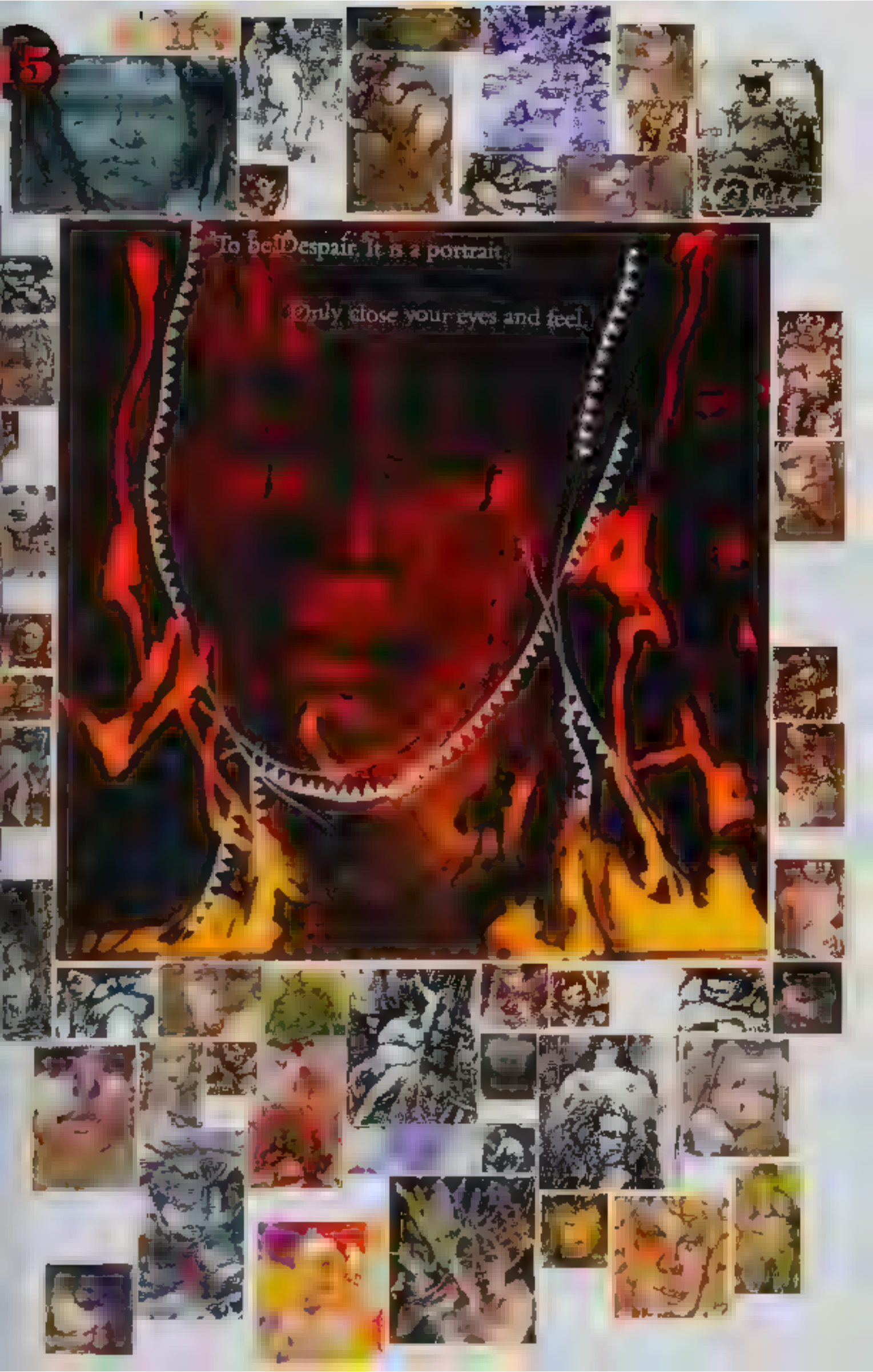
She was cold, rigid, frozen, when they found her.



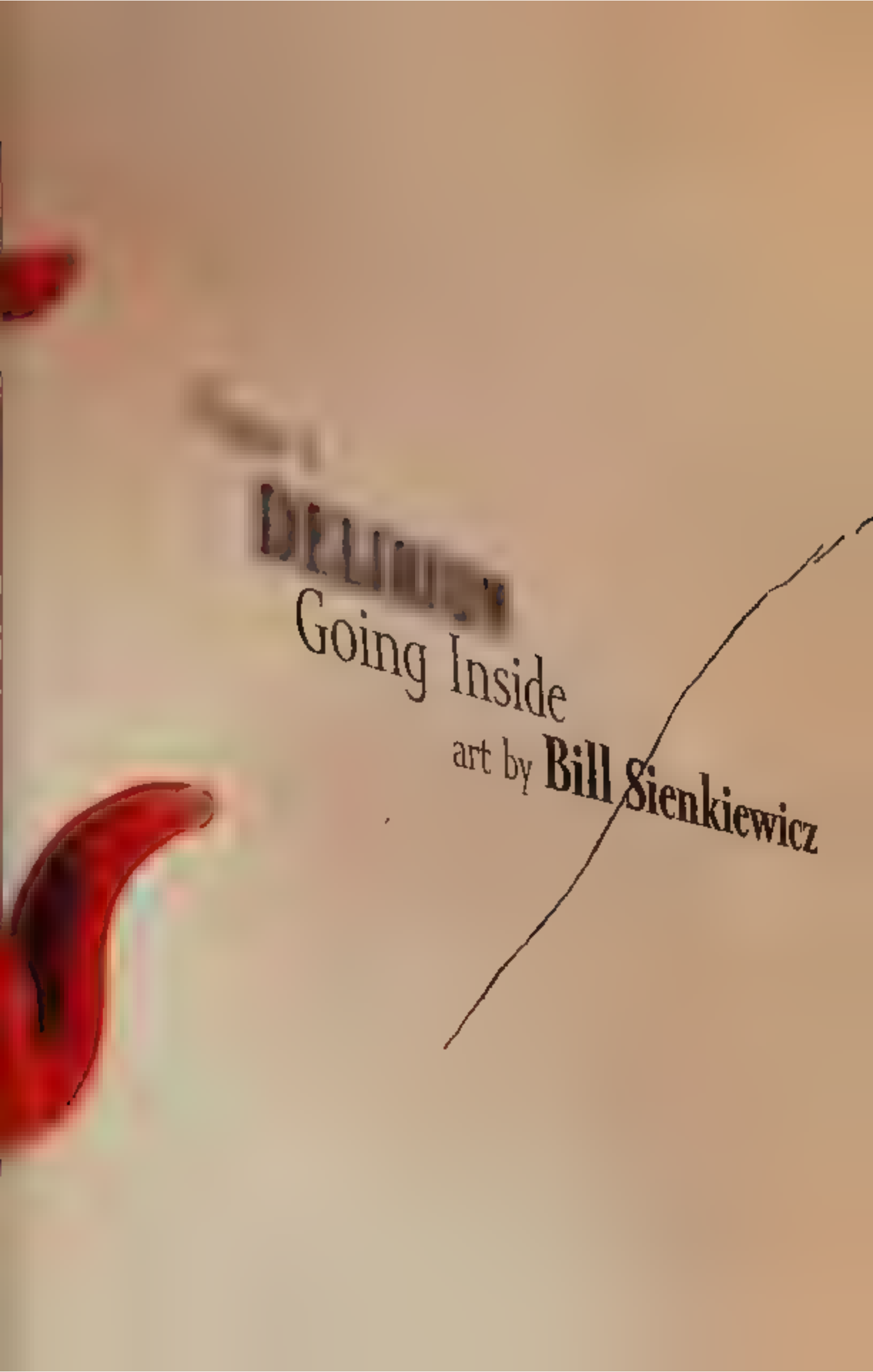
Someone like that, said the patrolwoman. You had to have everything to live for.

She tried to speak, to tell them that that was what made the pain unbearable but, like someone caught in a bad dream, she could not make herself heard. She screamed, and no sound came out. She watched as they took her body away.

She sat by the side of the road, in the snow, all boldness and afraid, waiting for the Happiness to start.

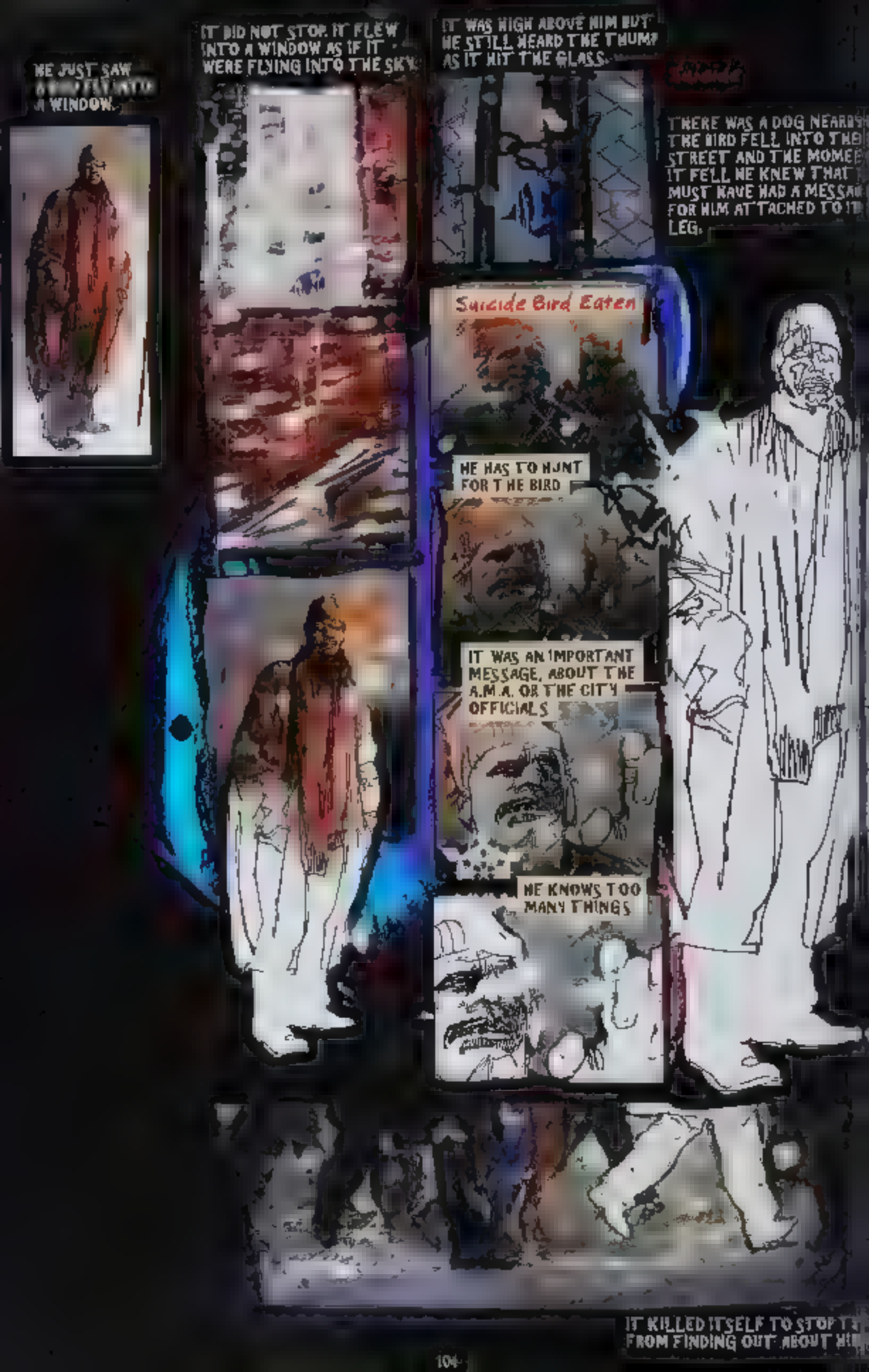

To hell Despair. It is a portrait.
Only close your eyes and feel.

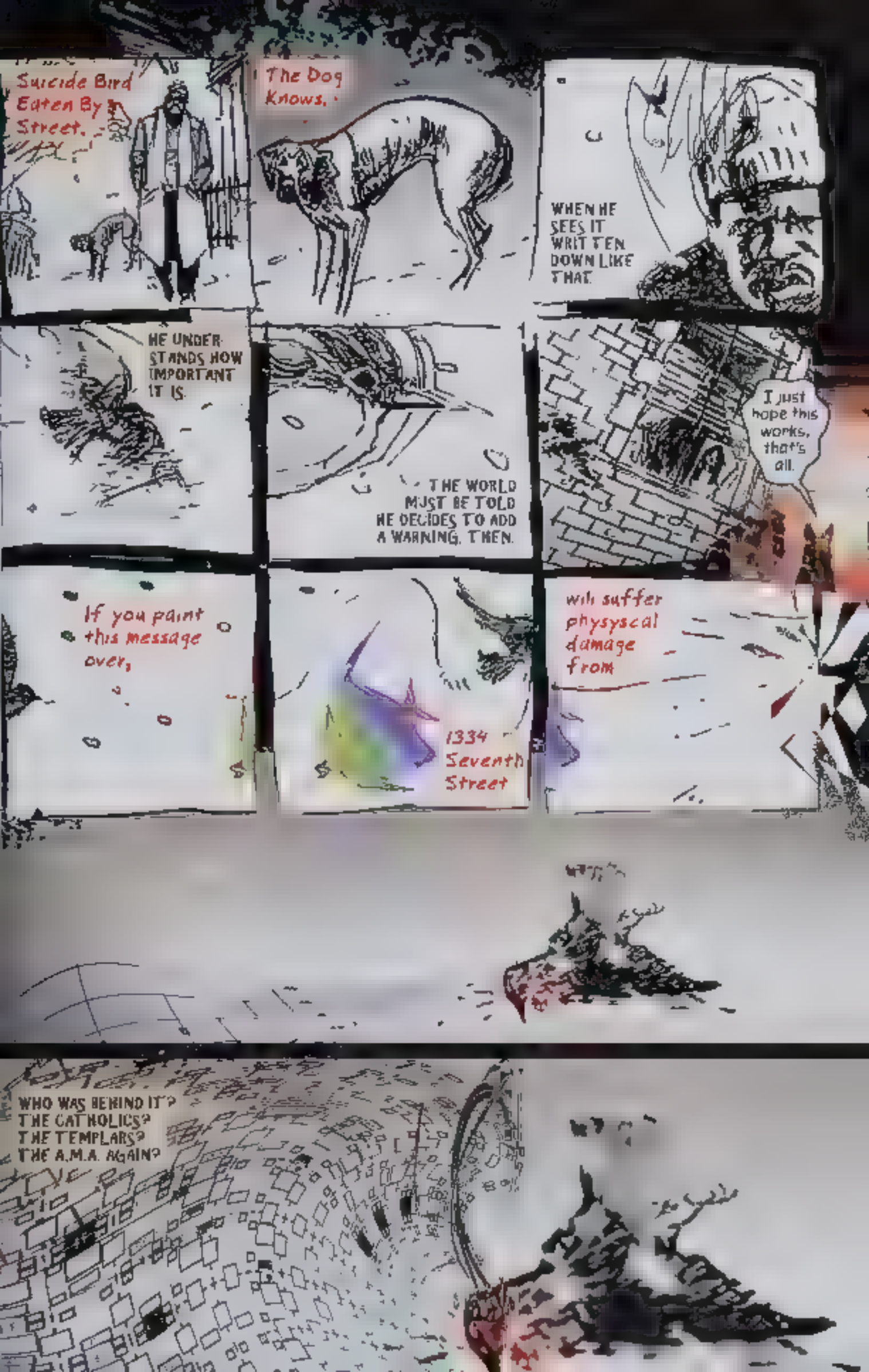

Chapter 5
DELIRIUM


Going Inside
art by Bill Sienkiewicz


She says
nothing

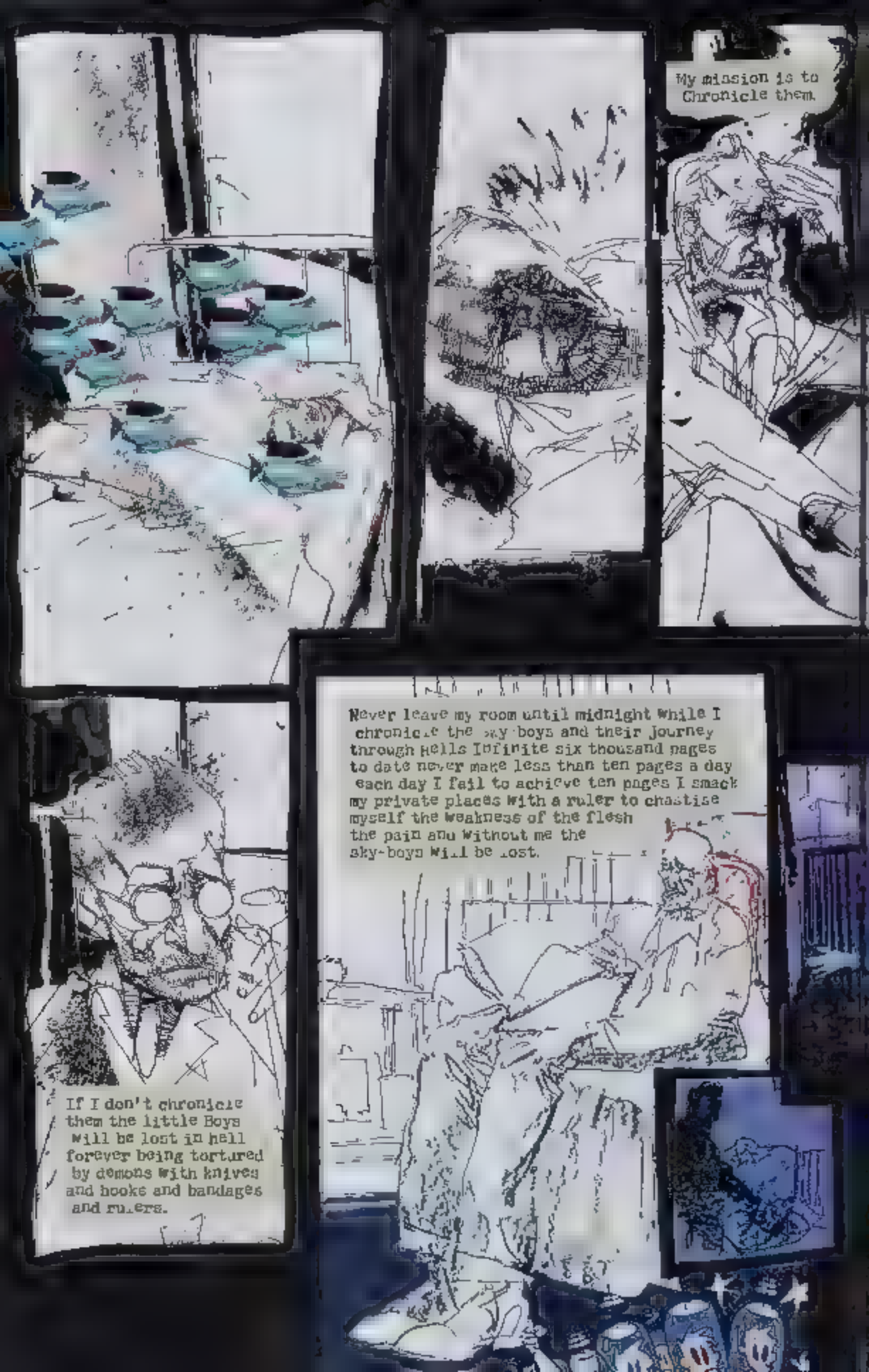

Every morning her mother dresses her
because the alternative is not to touch her ever
and her mother ever talks to her,
although she never says a word in reply
Every day her mother walks her across the room
and sits her in a chair
puts on the music she liked best before it happened
Nothing changes
And somewhere in the back of her head.
she can hear herself screaming

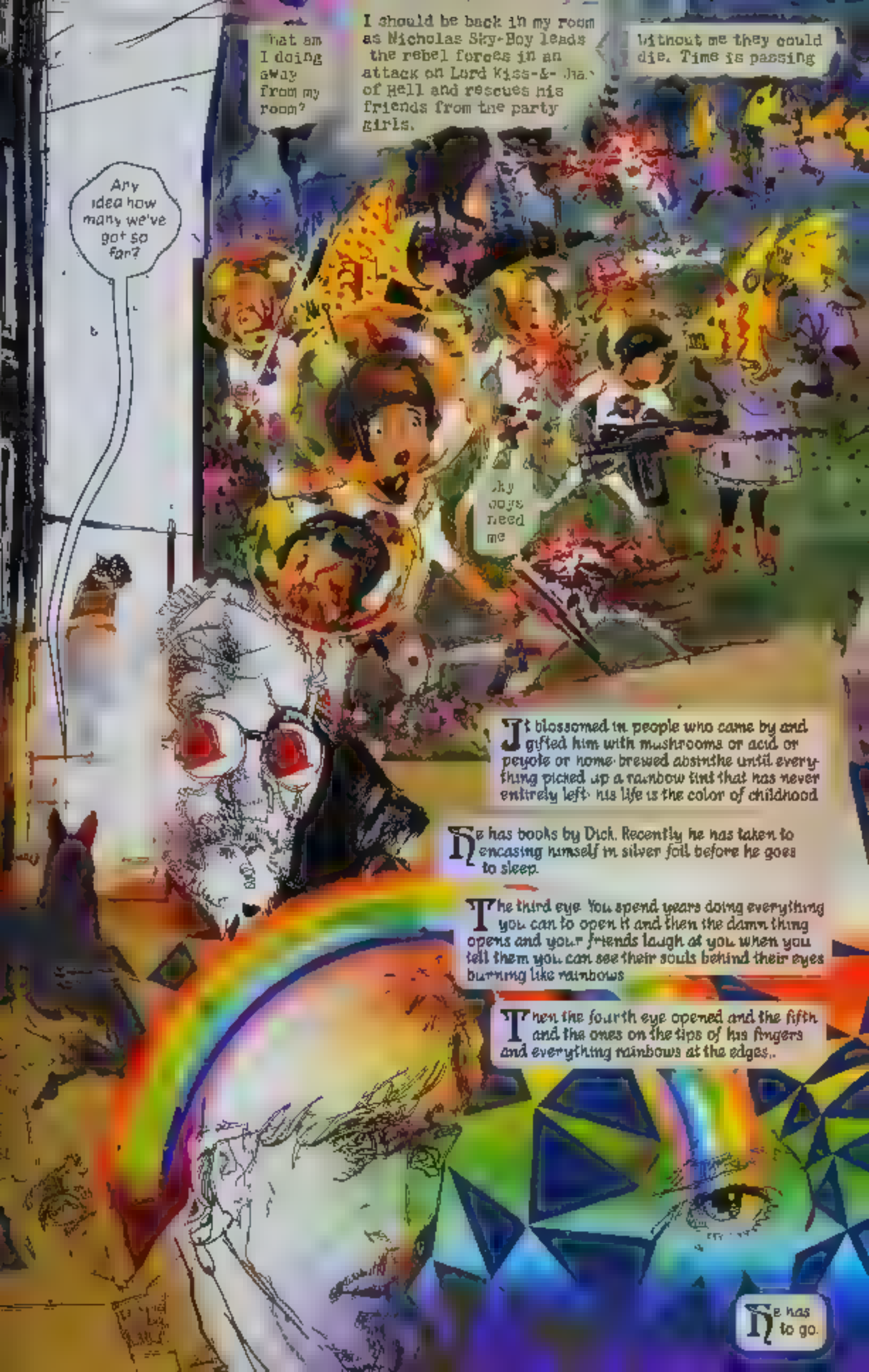

HE JUST SAW A BIRD FLY INTO A WINDOW.
IT DID NOT STOP. IT FLEW INTO A WINDOW AS IF IT WERE FLYING INTO THE SKY.
IT WAS HIGH ABOVE HIM BUT HE STILL HEARD THE THUMP AS IT HIT THE GLASS.
THERE WAS A DOG NEARBY THE BIRD FELL INTO THE STREET AND THE MOMENT IT FELL HE KNEW THAT IT MUST HAVE HAD A MESSAGE FOR HIM ATTACHED TO ITS LEG.
Suicide Bird Eaten
HE HAS TO HUNT FOR THE BIRD
IT WAS AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE, ABOUT THE A.M.A. OR THE CITY OFFICIALS
HE KNOWS TOO MANY THINGS
IT KILLED ITSELF TO STOP THEM FROM FINDING OUT ABOUT HIM

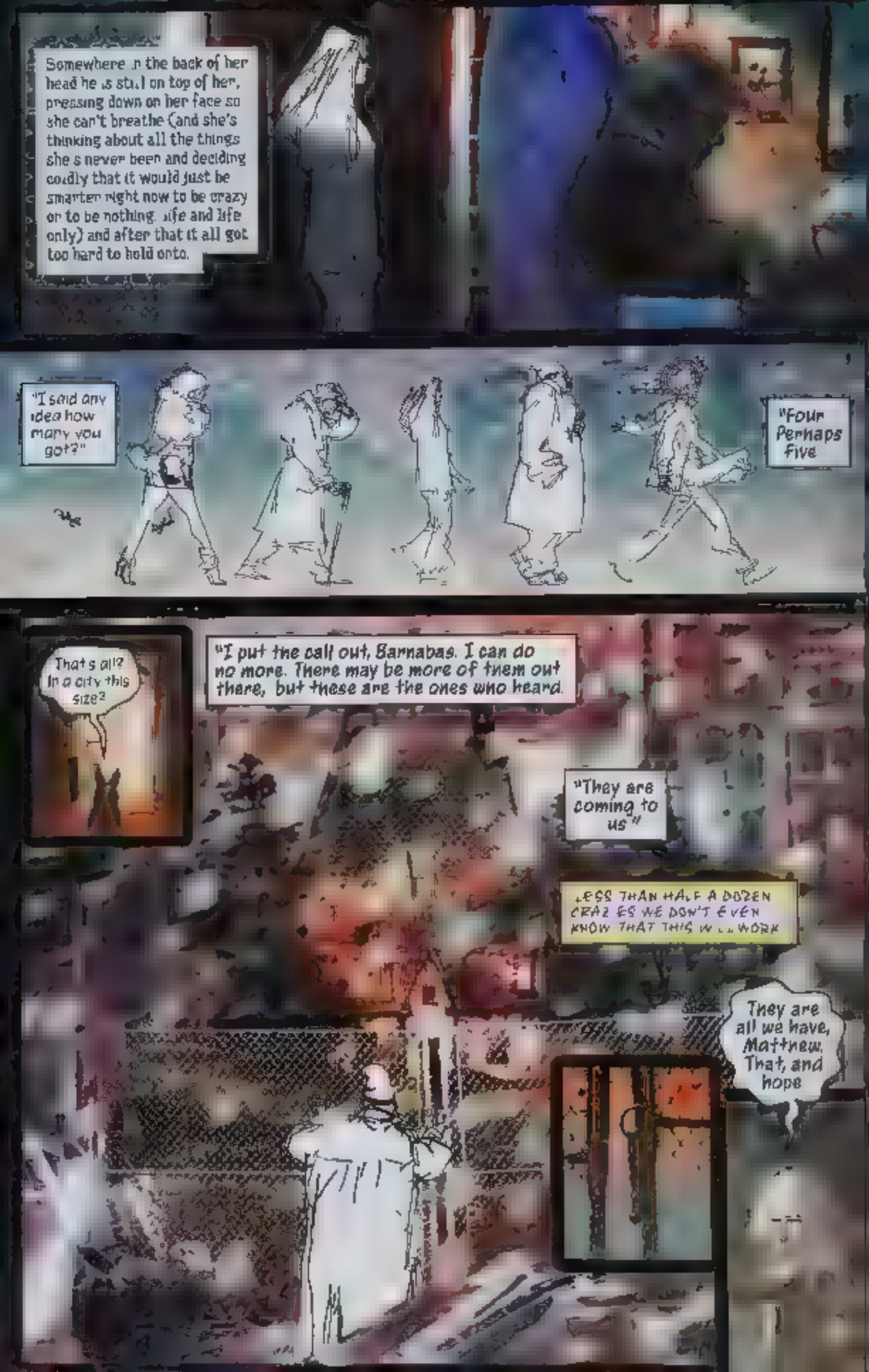

Suicide Bird Eaten By Street.
The Dog Knows.
WHEN HE SEES IT WRITTEN DOWN LIKE THAT
HE UNDERSTANDS HOW IMPORTANT IT IS.
THE WORLD MUST BE TOLD HE DECIDES TO ADD A WARNING. THEN.
I just hope this works, that's all.
If you paint this message over,
1334 Seventh Street
will suffer physycal damage from
WHO WAS BEHIND IT? THE CATHOLICS? THE TEMPLARS? THE A.M.A. AGAIN?


The WTO stooges - Templars! - American Medical!" Assosciation! No world! Know world! Listen to message from all vibrational organisms.
THE BIRD HAD GONE
THE DOG HAD GONE TOO.
FD
THAT PROVES THE WHOLE THING WAS PLANNED.
HE FEELS THE URGE TO BE SOMEWHERE. HE WILL WRITE HIS WISDOM ON THE WALL AS HE WALKS
EVERYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD WILL BE GRATEFUL FOR HIS KNOWLEDGE.


Listen. She was twenty-one years old (2+1=3) when she realized the big secret.
Men had babies too.
After the men took her womb, replaced it with lizards and fish, that was when she knew.
She wrote to the President the last time they pulled her off the street. She said they cloned my twins, all my babies.
Men have babies. They don't want us to know. Women do the work. They take our wombs. They laugh at us. She has some small animal inside her chest, maybe a mouse, crawling around like a lump. Right now it's inside her shoulder.
When she was twelve (1+2=3. There. That proved it) a girl spit on her tongue and told her where babies come from.
In the womb with the lizards waiting.
Tell them to give them back to me. And give us somewhere the sun shines, and pony rides and ice-cream and a place to go...
DON'T YOU WRITE THAT DOWN! DON'T YOU TELL!
HE STARES AT HER. THEY WALK ON TOGETHER.


My mission is to Chronicle them.
Never leave my room until midnight while I chronicle the sky-boys and their journey through Hells Infinite six thousand pages to date never make less than ten pages a day each day I fail to achieve ten pages I smack my private places with a ruler to chastise myself the weakness of the flesh the pain and without me the sky-boys will be lost.
If I don't chronicle them the little Boys will be lost in hell forever being tortured by demons with knives and books and bandages and rulers.


What am I doing away from my room?
I should be back in my room as Nicholas Sky-Boy leads the rebel forces in an attack on Lord Kiss-&- Jha.' of Hell and rescues his friends from the party girls.
Without me they could die. Time is passing
Any idea how many we've got so far?
Sky boys need me
It blossomed in people who came by and gifted him with mushrooms or acid or peyote or home-brewed absinthe until everything picked up a rainbow tint that has never entirely left. His life is the color of childhood
He has books by Dick. Recently he has taken to encasing himself in silver foil before he goes to sleep.
The third eye. You spend years doing everything you can to open it and then the damn thing opens and your friends laugh at you when you tell them you can see their souls behind their eyes burning like rainbows
Then the fourth eye opened and the fifth and the ones on the tips of his fingers and everything rainbows at the edges..
He has to go.


Somewhere in the back of her head he is still on top of her, pressing down on her face so she can't breathe (and she's thinking about all the things she's never been and deciding coldly that it would just be smarter right now to be crazy or to be nothing. Life and life only) and after that it all got too hard to hold onto.
"I said any idea how many you got?"
"Four Perhaps Five
That's all? In a city this size?
"I put the call out, Barnabas. I can do no more. There may be more of them out there, but these are the ones who heard.
"They are coming to us"
LESS THAN HALF A DOZEN CRAZIES WE DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT THIS WILL WORK
They are all we have, Matthew. That, and hope


REMINDS ME OF A STORY I
EARD ABOUT A FIRE IN A NUT HOUSE
ND ALL THE DOCTORS AND NURSES
ERE FREAKING OUT Y'KNOW, WE'RE
LL GONNA DIE ALL THAT
AND THEN THE PARANOIDS
QUIETLY LED EVERYBODY TO SAFETY
Y'SEE, THEY KNEW SOMETHING BAD WAS
GOING TO HAPPEN SO THEY'D ALREADY
CHECKED OUT THE EXITS THEY WERE
PREPARED
This is
our rescue
squad?
Jesus
Do not
judge them by
appearances,
Barnabas
They are,
after all, all
we have.


Okay, team, listen up. There's somebody in big trouble, and you are our crack troops. No pun intended.
Through that door is a girl. She's hurt. You have to go in and bring her back. Any questions?
THIS GIRL WAS THAT WHAT THE SUICIDE BIRD KNEW? WERE YOU THE DOG?
Uh. Can I get back to you on that one? Anyone else?
IS THIS ABOUT THE RAINBOWS.
Could well be. Okay, people. Just remember. Little girl. Hurting. We have to get her out. Okay?
Can we head into the bathroom? Keep toward the wall and please try to stay together.


WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I confess, they do not fill me with confidence
Yeah But could you or I go in there when she's in this kind of shape?
No, friend dog. I do not believe that any of us could enter and return with our minds intact
Is not talking. Does not know where she is. GET OFF she wanted to say. GET OFF ME. but his hand was over her face and barging her forehead so hard against the wall and that was when she realized it was easier to slip inside
She's still inside
What she wants to know is this.
Why are so many people inside with her?

HE PULLS OUT A SHARPIE AND COMMENCES TO WRITE AS THEY GO *The suicide bird knew they hurt her. Do not paint over this message.*

AS HE WRITES THE FORMS BENEATH HIS WORDS STOP WRITHING AND HOLD THEIR SHAPE

HE LEAVES A TRAIL OF MESSAGES BEHIND HIM.

She opens her mouth and fishes come out. Not just one fish. Hundreds, maybe. It's liberating, knowing that they are leaving her, but it also makes her feel lonely.

"You know men have babies?"

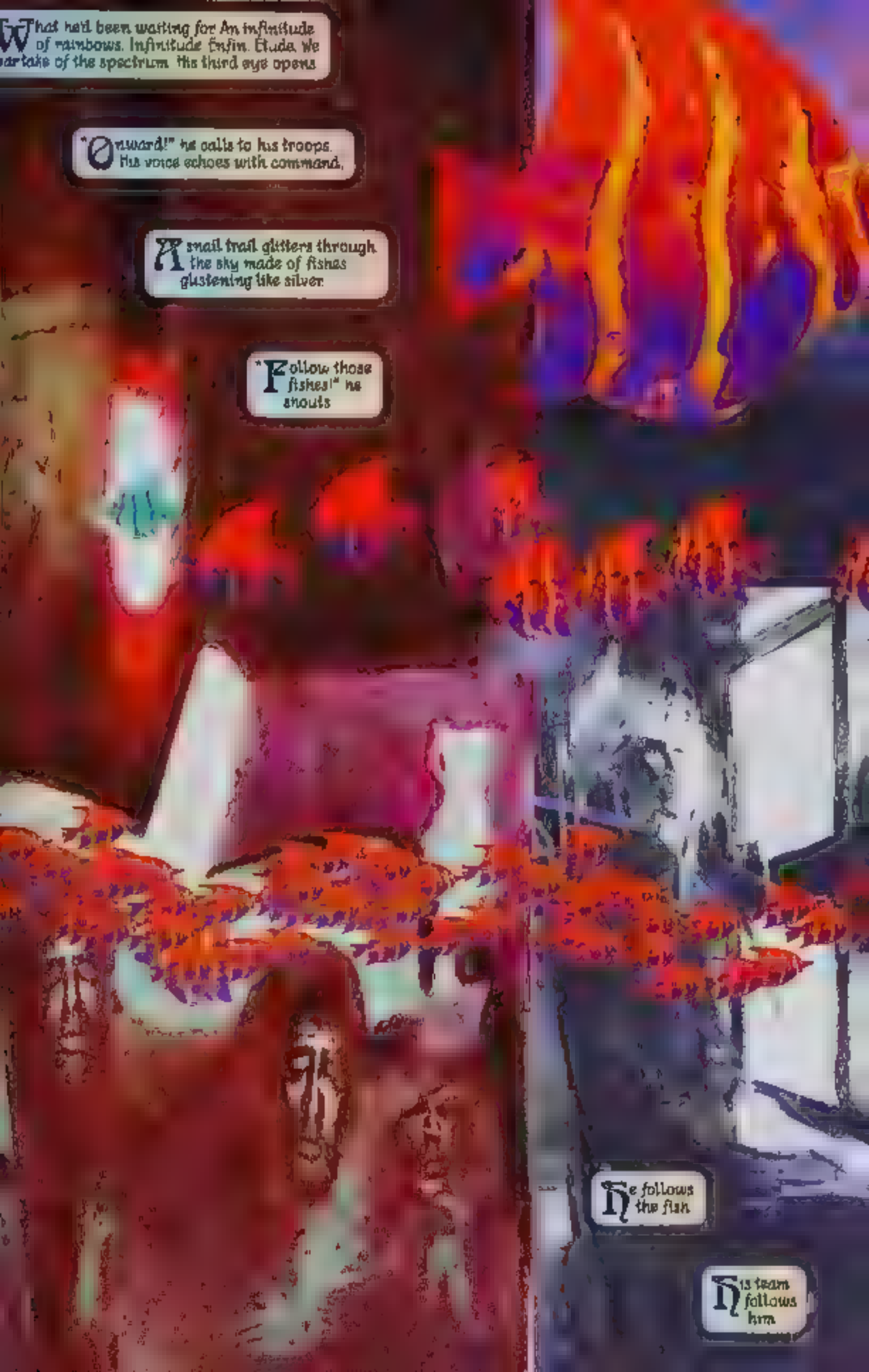
"Everybody knows men have babies," they all tell her as they twinkle off across the sky.

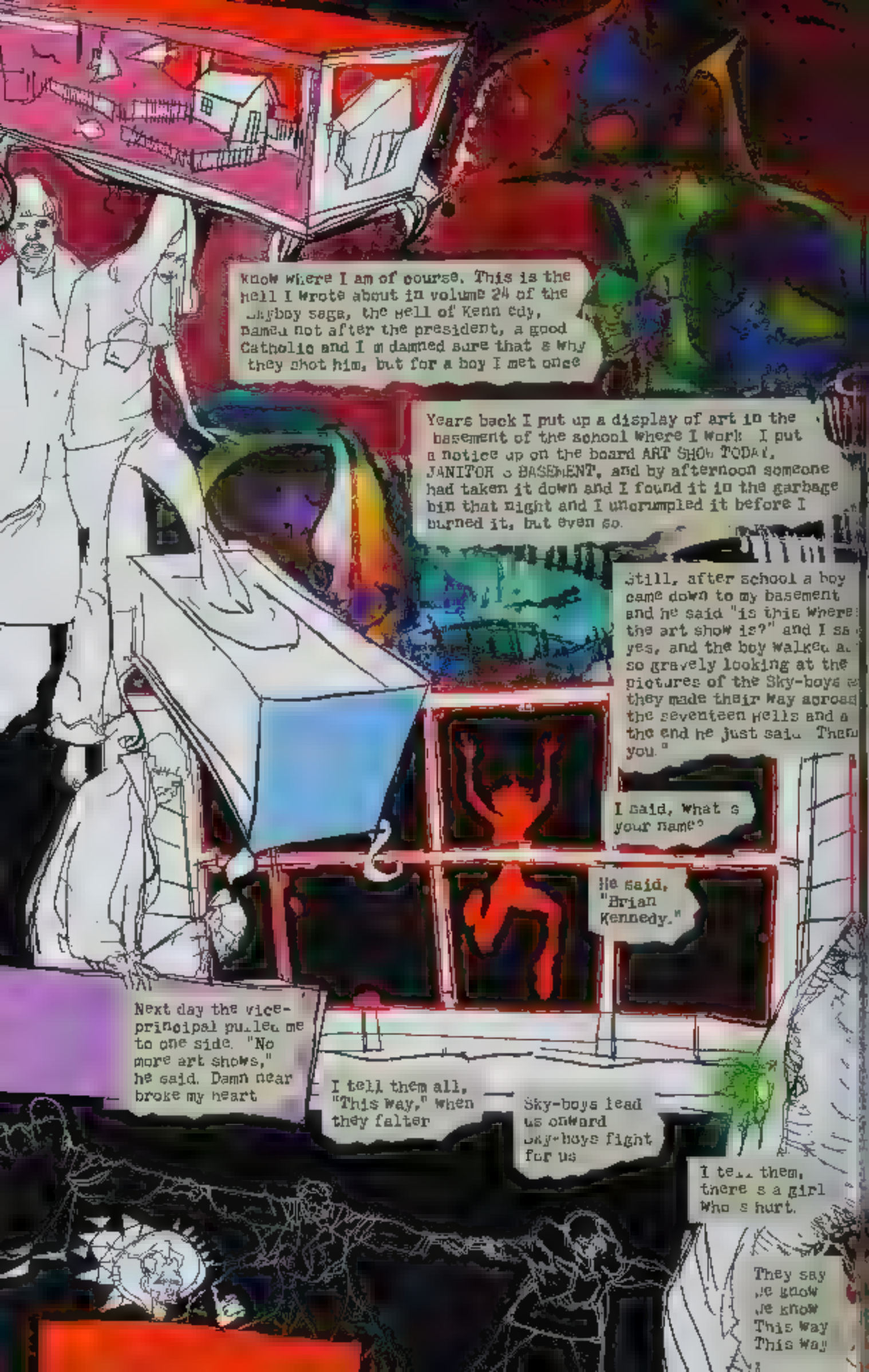
"There's a girl," she tells them. "She's hurt."

"We know about that," they tell her, sadly. Then they begin to sing. She didn't know that fish songs were so lovely.

There were such wonderful things inside her. Who knew? Who could have known?

"Hey, Mom! Guess what I am! A Carcharadon carcharias!"


What had been waiting for An infinitude of rainbows. Infinitude Enfin. Etude. We partake of the spectrum. His third eye opens
"Onward!" he calls to his troops. His voice echoes with command.
A snail trail glitters through the sky made of fishes glistening like silver.
"Follow those fishes!" he shouts
He follows the fish
His team follows him


know where I am of course. This is the hell I wrote about in volume 24 of the Skyboy saga, the hell of Kenn edy, named not after the president, a good Catholic and I m damned sure that s why they shot him, but for a boy I met once
Years back I put up a display of art in the basement of the school where I work I put a notice up on the board ART SHOW TODAY, JANITOR s BASEMENT, and by afternoon someone had taken it down and I found it in the garbage bin that night and I uncrumpled it before I burned it, but even so.
Still, after school a boy came down to my basement and he said "is this where the art show is?" and I sa yes, and the boy walked a so gravely looking at the pictures of the Sky-boys as they made their way across the seventeen Hells and a the end he just said Thank you."
I said, What s your name?
He said, "Brian Kennedy."
Next day the vice-principal pulled me to one side. "No more art shows," he said. Damn near broke my heart
I tell them all, "This way," when they falter
Sky-boys lead us onward Sky-boys fight for us
I tell them, there s a girl Who s hurt.
They say We know We know This way This way


HONY
ENFIN. ETUDE THE RAINBOW BLINDS ME
INCOMING! SHARK ATTACK!
WHAT IS THAT THING?
BIG AS MOUNTAINS
EATING. SCREAMING
KEEP AWAY!
T'S A DEMON.
IT'S HER
YOU HURT
IT'S OKAY I HURT TOO HOLD MY HAND

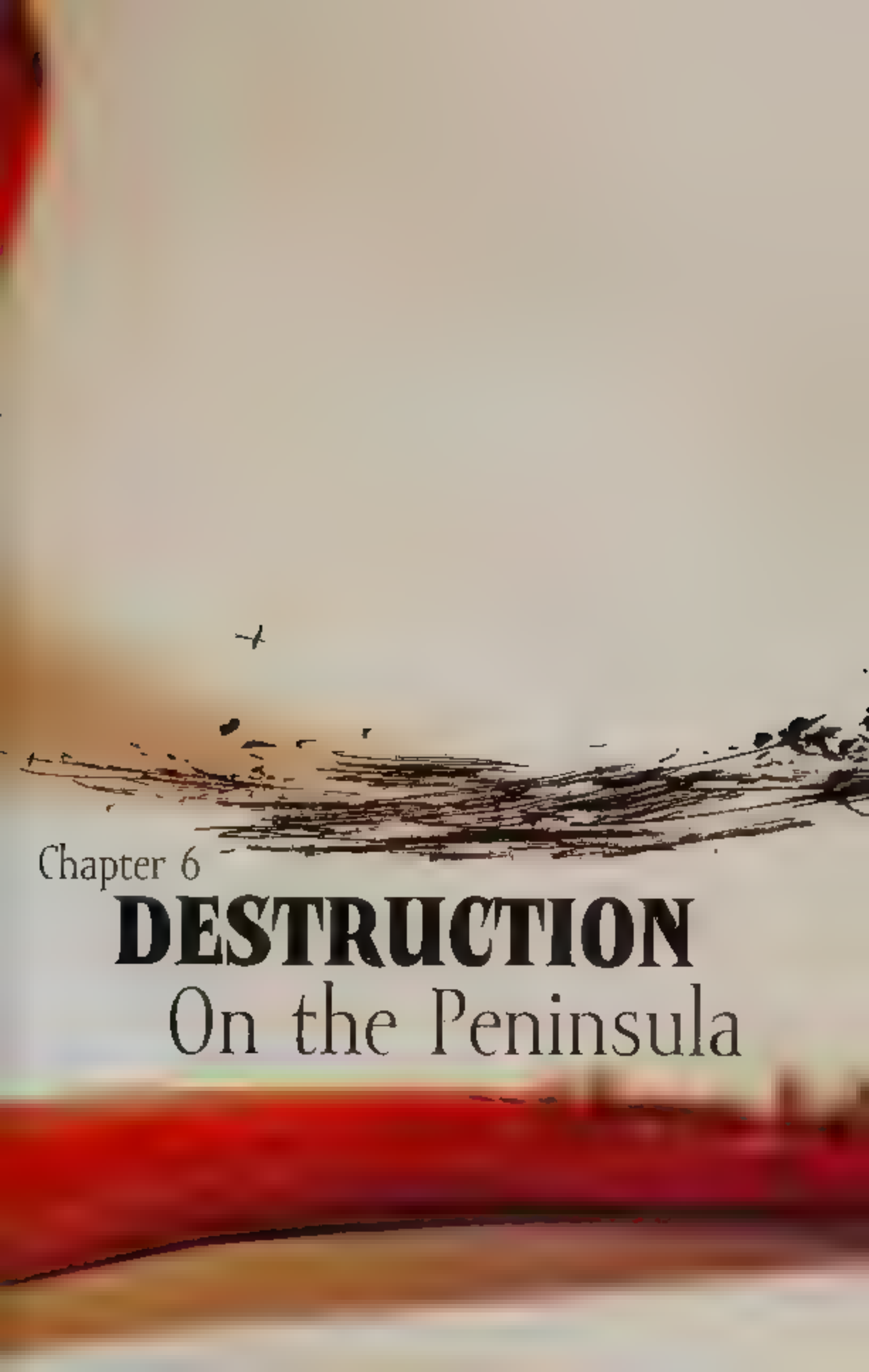

have no truck w th
the suicide birds
HE HAS NO JOY
IN HIS HEART
HIS MESSAGES
WERE HEARD
She knows the music the fishes sing. She croons that music, sadly knowing that once your fishes leave you, they can never come back.
He has peace in his soul. All his imaginings are knowledge. He will preach the savior. He will spread the gospel of the rainbow


IT'S OKAY I HURT TOO HOLD MY HAND
And then they are back in the crumbling townhouse in the winter and the two girls are still holding each other tightly as if they never want to let each other go.
AM I AM I HERE? I WAS SUCH A LONG WAY INSIDE.
elcome back.
HELLO. DOGGIE
You scared us Don't do that.
I HURTED
"SOMEONE MUST HAVE TAKEN HER"
"COULDN'T SHE HAVE JUST WANDERED AWAY, MA'AM?"
"NO! SHE. I'M SORRY SHE'S BEEN NEARLY CATATONIC FOR OVER A YEAR ..YOU DON'T JUST GET UP AND WALK..."
H MUM I'M HOME


LOOKS LIKE SOMETIMES YOU DO JUST THAT
I MET A GIRL AND SHE WAS HURTING I GAVE HER A HUG THERE WAS A MAN WHO SEES RAINBOWS AND A MAN WHO SEES LITTLE BLEEDING HEART BOYS AND A LADY WHO HAD MAGIC BABIES AND A WRITING MAN
WELL SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAD QUITE THE LITTLE ADVENTURE OUT THERE
THE GIRL I SAW MOMMY WHY DID SHE HURT SO MUCH?
MAYBE SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER HON.
WE SHOULD GET YOU BACK TO BED
I SPENT ENOUGH TIME THERE ALREADY
I'M DONE NOW
I'LL LET IT GO
I have heard the languages of apocalypses and now I shall embrace





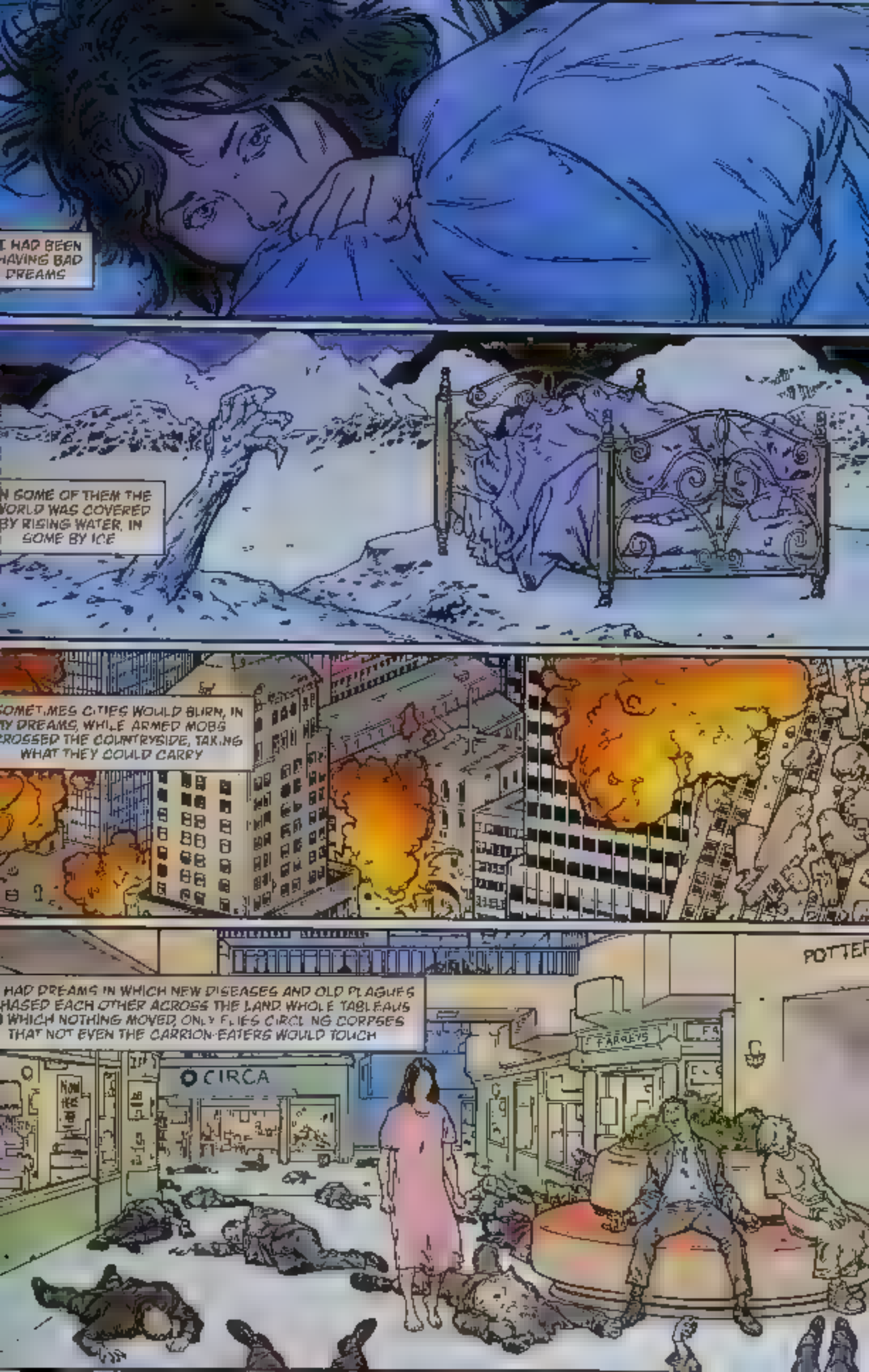


Chapter 6

DESTRUCTION

On the Peninsula


On the Peninsula
art by Glenn Fabry

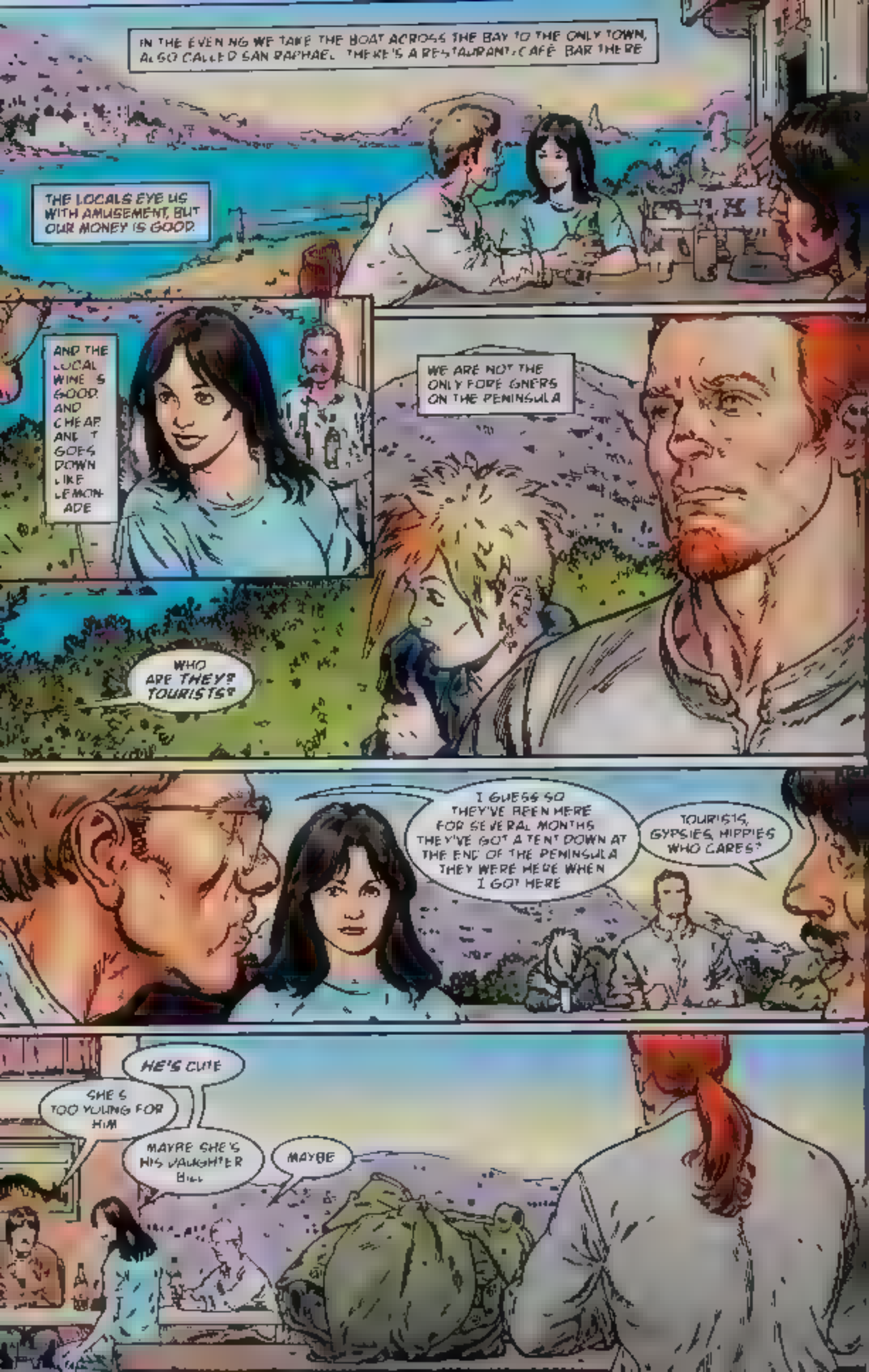

I HAD BEEN HAVING BAD DREAMS
N SOME OF THEM THE ORLD WAS COVERED BY RISING WATER. IN SOME BY ICE
SOMETIMES CITIES WOULD BURN, IN MY DREAMS, WHILE ARMED MOBS CROSSED THE COUNTRYSIDE, TAKING WHAT THEY COULD CARRY
HAD DREAMS IN WHICH NEW DISEASES AND OLD PLAGUES HASED EACH OTHER ACROSS THE LAND WHOLE TABLEAUS WHICH NOTHING MOVED, ONLY FLIES CIRCLING CORPSES THAT NOT EVEN THE CARRION-EATERS WOULD TOUCH
POTTER
FARLEYS
CIRCA


EVERY NIGHT THE DREAMS GREW WORSE
SOMETIMES THEY EVEN CREPT INTO MY DAY
NO SMOKING
"YOU NEED A CHANGE"


I KNOW I DO I REALLY NEED A CHANGE
LOOK, HAVE YOU HEARD OF SAN RAPHAEL? IT'S A PENINSULA, OFF THE COAST OF SARDINIA.
NO.
I'M SETTING UP A DIG THERE A SORT OF QUASI-ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION.
IT'S ALL KIND OF HUSH-HUSH IF YOU LIKE, I COULD DROP SOMEONE AN E-MAIL, SEE WHAT I COULD DO
YOU HAVE THE EXPERTISE, BUT I'D NEED TO GET YOU CLEARANCE
WELL, I'VE GOT TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE START OF THE NEXT SEMESTER, AND NOTHING TO DO IN IT,
...AND I DO NEED A CHANGE
WHY IS IT HUSH-HUSH? IS IT SOME LONG LOST PALACE?
MUCH MORE INTERESTING IT'S CLASSIFIED, THOUGH YOU'LL HAVE TO SIGN YOUR LIFE AWAY
NOT A PROBLEM.
SO TEN DAYS LATER I WENT TO SAN RAPHAEL SEVERAL PLANES, THEN A DRIVE. THEN, FINALLY, A BOAT RIDE...
WELCOME TO THE END OF THE WORLD. HERE LET ME HELP YOU WITH YOUR BAG.


IT REALLY IS THE END OF THE WORLD HERE
I GUESS I MEAN THAT IN MOST WAYS YOU CAN MEAN IT. PEOPLE WHO END UP HERE AREN'T GOING ANY FURTHER
WE'RE KEEPING THE SITE AND ITS NATURE CONFIDENTIAL OTHERWISE WE LAY OURSELVES OPEN TO RIDICULE
BUT I GOTTA TELLYA, ONCE THE SITE IS FULLY EXCAVATED AND DOCUMENTED, WE WILL SHAKE ARCHAEOLOGY TO ITS FOUNDATIONS MAYBE SOME OTHER SCIENCES AS WELL
COME ON, STANLEY, ON AN ISLAND THAT'S SEEN NOTHING BUT GOATS AND A COUPLE OF BUSHES SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME?
SAN RAPHAEL'S A PENINSULA, NOT AN ISLAND
HERE WE ARE WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?
IT'S A HILL WHAT IT, A BUR MOUND
IN A WAY
FOR A START, I WASN'T HERE A YEAR AGO
COME ON, STANLEY YOU MUST ADMIT THAT SOUNDS A BIT UNLIKELY
NO, RACHEL THAT'S NOT UNLIKELY THIS IS UNLIKELY


SPEAKING AS N ARCHAEOLOGIST, SAY IT'S A PENNY 'S AN AMERICAN ICOLN PENNY ONE F SEVERAL BILLION MINTED
IT'S NOT EXACTLY A UNIQUE ARTEFACT, STANLEY PROBABLY DROPPED BY A TOURIST
LOOK CLOSER
IT BEARS A DATE THAT HASN'T HAPPENED YET THAT'S WHAT WE'RE EXCAVATING HERE
IT'S THE FUTURE.
I'M IN THE BIG YELLOW TENT YOURS IS OVER THERE
THE COIN IT COULD BE A HOAX.
COULD BE I'VE GOT DRAWER FULL OF THEM IN THE SITE OFFICE NOTHING LATER THAN FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW.
BUT WE'VE BARELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE


IN THE EVENING WE TAKE THE BOAT ACROSS THE BAY TO THE ONLY TOWN, ALSO CALLED SAN RAPHAEL. THERE'S A RESTAURANT/CAFÉ BAR THERE
THE LOCALS EYE US WITH AMUSEMENT, BUT OUR MONEY IS GOOD.
AND THE LOCAL WINE IS GOOD AND CHEAP AND IT GOES DOWN LIKE LEMONADE
WE ARE NOT THE ONLY FOREIGNERS ON THE PENINSULA
WHO ARE THEY? TOURISTS?
I GUESS SO THEY'VE BEEN HERE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THEY'VE GOT A TENT DOWN AT THE END OF THE PENINSULA THEY WERE HERE WHEN I GOT HERE
TOURISTS, GYPSIES, HIPPIES WHO CARES?
HE'S CUTE
SHE'S TOO YOUNG FOR HIM
MAYBE SHE'S HIS DAUGHTER BILL
MAYBE

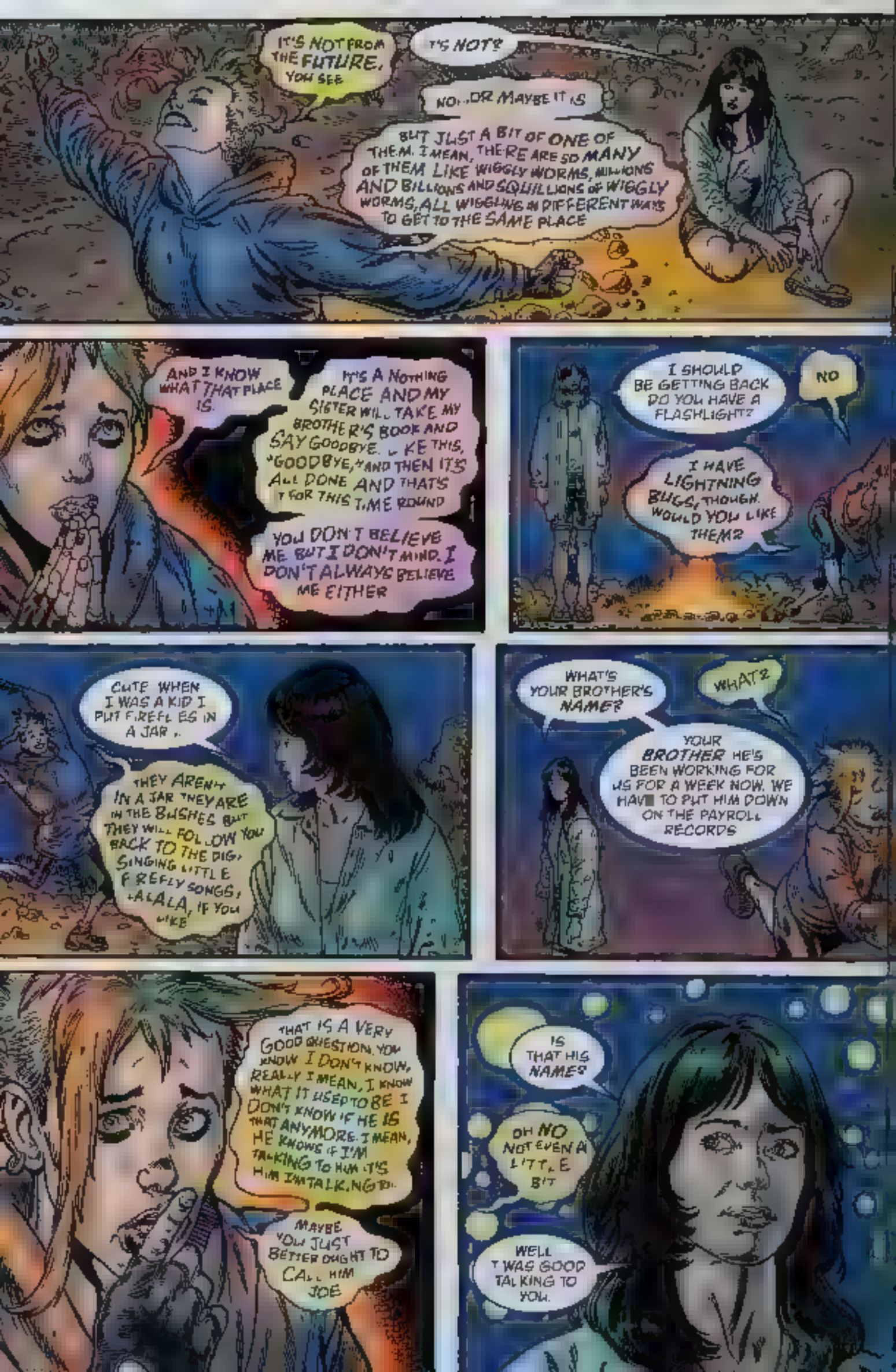

LIKE I SAID THE WINE WENT DOWN LIKE LEMONADE


HELLO
HELLO
DO YOU NEED TO GET THAT OUT IN ONE PIECE?
I'VE BEEN WORKING ON IT ALL MORNING
DO YOU MIND ?
OF COURSE I DO. I'M A PROFESSIONAL, I ALMOST SAY
AND PLEASE, THE WORST THING FOR SITES LIKE THIS IS AMATEURS TRYING TO EXCAVATE THEM..
AND HE CIRCLES MY HANDS WITH HIS GIANT HANDS AND THEN LIGHTLY HE TAPS


THERE
HEY.
HAVE YOU HAD ANY EXPERIENCE? WITH RUINS?
I'VE CERTAINLY MADE MY SHARE OF THEM
NO, REALLY. DO YOU NEED A JOB?
YOU WHAT?
I ASKED HIM TO HELP. WE NEED HELP BILL'S USELESS
HMPH.
I DID NOT DREAM THAT NIGHT. THEN AGAIN, I DIDN'T GET A LOT OF SLEEP SO I TYPED, AND I WORKED ON MY OWN.
HE WAS ALREADY THERE AT 8 A.M. THAT MORNING, WHEN I GOT DOWN TO THE DIG


WE WORKED TOGETHER, EXCAVATING A CACHE OF FOSSILIZED MAGAZINES.
THEY CRUMBLED TO POWDER AS WE PULLED THEM OUT, ALTHOUGH THE COVER OF THE TOPMOST MAGAZINE WAS IMPRINTED REVERSED ON THE TOP LAYER 3MIT WAS THE MAGAZINE IT WARNED OF ISAW.
AT THE END OF THE WEEK, WE FOUND THINGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN BULLETS. ALL OF THEM WERE SPENT EXCEPT FOR ONE WHICH GLOWED BLUE WHEN I TOUCHED IT
LOOK AT THIS!
A PRICELESS ARTEFACT OF THE FUTURE AND IT GLOWS!
OW.
WHAT, WHAT WAS THAT?
IT WAS A HUNTER-KILLER SLUG STILL ALIVE
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
THEY'RE LIKE KNIVES OR CLUBS. THE PATTERNS ARE DIFFERENT, BUT THE PURPOSE OF THE OBJECT IS OBVIOUS.


THE BIG GUY DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR WORK THE NEXT DAY HE WASN'T AT THE CAFÉ IN THE EVENING
WHERE'S YOUR FRIEND?
HE WENT FOR A WALK
OH
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE WENT FOR A WALK HE HASN'T GONE VERY FAR HE HAS TO STAY SORT OF NEAR ME FOR A BIT THEY ASKED HIM TO KEEP AN EYE ON ME THE REST OF MY FAMILY
WHY?
BECAUSE, BECAUSE I WAS SICK I GUESS.. THEY DON'T WANT ME TO BE ON MY OWN
YOU KNOW WHY THE THING, THE HILL, THE PLACE YOU'RE DIGGING IS THERE?
NO
IT'S BECAUSE OF ME OR BECAUSE OF HIM, MAYBE OR BOTH OF US I GUESS IT'S BOTH OF US, REALLY BEING HERE THAT DOES IT


IT'S NOT FROM THE FUTURE, YOU SEE
IT'S NOT?
NO...OR MAYBE IT IS
BUT JUST A BIT OF ONE OF THEM. I MEAN, THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM LIKE WIGGLY WORMS, MILLIONS AND BILLIONS AND SQUILLIONS OF WIGGLY WORMS, ALL WIGGLING IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET TO THE SAME PLACE
AND I KNOW WHAT THAT PLACE IS.
IT'S A NOTHING PLACE AND MY SISTER WILL TAKE MY BROTHER'S BOOK AND SAY GOODBYE. LIKE THIS, "GOODBYE," AND THEN IT'S ALL DONE AND THAT'S IT FOR THIS TIME ROUND
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME BUT I DON'T MIND. I DON'T ALWAYS BELIEVE ME EITHER
I SHOULD BE GETTING BACK DO YOU HAVE A FLASHLIGHT?
NO
I HAVE LIGHTNING BUGS, THOUGH. WOULD YOU LIKE THEM?
CUTE WHEN I WAS A KID I PUT FIREFLIES IN A JAR..
THEY AREN'T IN A JAR THEY ARE IN THE BUSHES BUT THEY WILL FOLLOW YOU BACK TO THE DIG, SINGING LITTLE FIREFLY SONGS, "LALALA, IF YOU LIKE
WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER'S NAME?
WHAT?
YOUR BROTHER HE'S BEEN WORKING FOR US FOR A WEEK NOW. WE HAVE TO PUT HIM DOWN ON THE PAYROLL RECORDS
THAT IS A VERY GOOD QUESTION. YOU KNOW I DON'T KNOW, REALLY I MEAN, I KNOW WHAT IT USED TO BE I DON'T KNOW IF HE IS THAT ANYMORE. I MEAN, HE KNOWS IF I'M TALKING TO HIM IT'S HIM I'M TALKING TO.
MAYBE YOU JUST BETTER OUGHT TO CALL HIM JOE
IS THAT HIS NAME?
OH NO NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT
WELL IT WAS GOOD TALKING TO YOU.


HELLO. I SPOKE TO YOUR SISTER
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE DONE
SHE SAID I SHOULD CALL YOU JOE
SHE DID, DID SHE? WELL, PERHAPS SHE'S FEELING BETTER
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
HARD TO SAY. SHE WON'T TELL ANYONE I THINK SHE GOT HER FEELINGS HURT, AND SHE WENT TOO DEEPLY INSIDE HERSELF
WHEN YOU'RE THAT AGE IT'S TOO EASY TO GET YOUR HEART BROKEN I REMEMBER
HMM DO YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT IT WAS?
YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING WEIRD? HE SAID THAT SHE DIDN'T HAVE A ASHLIGHT AND THAT THE LIGHT NING BUGS WOULD FOLLOW ME BACK HERE
AND THEY DID.
I'M SURE THEY DID
GOODNIGHT, JOE SEE YOU TOMORROW
GOODNIGHT
AND HIS HUGE HAND CLOSED AROUND MINE
AND I WENT BACK TO MY TENT, ALONE


I WAS WOKEN BY HELICOPTERS
"THESE PEOPLE WANT TO WHAT?"
I TOLD YOU, MA'AM. SEND IN THE BULLDOZERS.
THERE ARE ISOTOPES IN THE SAMPLES YOU SENT BACK
THAT WE'VE ONLY BEEN ABLE TO MAK IN LABORA-TORIES UNTIL NOW
THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS DONE A DEAL WITH ONE OF THE BIG CHEMICAL COMPAN ES TO TAK THE ENT RE HILL. THEIR PAPERS ARE IN ORDER
BUT THAT HILL'S PRICELESS.
EXACTLY, DOCTOR T'S PRICELESS
BUT WE'RE EXCAVATING THE FUTURE
MA'AM, HAS IT OCCURRED TO YOU, THAT IF THE CONTENTS OF THAT MOUND FALLS INTO THE WRONG HANDS, THERE MAY NOT BE ANY FUTURE?
BECAUSE THEY'LL MAKE WEAPONS OUT OF THEM, AND YOU WON'T?
REMEMBER THE SECOND WORLD WAR SOMET MES THE RIGHT WEAPON IN THE RIGHT HANDS CAN SAVE MILLIONS OF LIVES
YOU KNOW, THERE ARE OBJECTS IN THAT HILL THINGS FROM THE FUTURE DANGEROUS THINGS
WE'RE FROM THE GOVERNMENT WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING
SURE YOU DO.
STANLEY, I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE WHILE T IS HAPPENING I'M GOING B TO THE MAINLAND


THIS S A CLASSIFIED SITE MA'AM I FORBID YOU TO LEAVE
YOU'RE HERE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A CHEMICAL COMPANY I'M AN ACADEMIC ON FOREIGN SOIL
AND A THREE THOUSAND WORD DESCRIPTION OF THIS PLACE AND THE ARTEFACTS WE'VE UNEARTHED WILL BE SENT TO SLASHDOT ORG BY A ROBOT UNLESS I GET ONLINE AND CANCEL IT TONIGHT YOU CAN'T FORBID ME ANY THING
I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, RACHEL
SORRY, STANLEY
HEY.
I SAW THEM ACROSS THE SQUARE. IN THE TOWN ON THE MAINLAND, SO THEY MUST HAVE GOTTEN OUT TOO I WAS PLEASED
BUT THEY'D GONE BY THE TIME I GOT TO THE CAFÉ


SO I SAT DOWN IN THE CAFÉ, AND I ORDERED A GLASS OF RED WINE, AND I STARED ACROSS THE BAY, AND THOUGHT ABOUT THE BULLDOZERS CRASHING INTO THE SIDE OF THE HILL


I WONDER WHAT IT WAS THAT DID IT ANOTHER HUNTER-KILLER SUB? OR SOMETHING ELSE SOME OTHER WEAPON FROM A WAR WE'VE NOT YET FOUGHT
WHATEVER IT WAS, IT WAS CLEAN ONE FLASH OF LIGHT AND THE PENINSULA WAS GONE
AN EARTHQUAKE, THEY SAID IN ONE OF THE PAPERS. OR AN UNDERSEA VOLCANO. BUT MOST PAPERS DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
NOBODY KNOWS NOBODY CARES.
THERE'S A PENINSULA WITH THE FUTURE ON IT THAT ISN'T THERE ANY MORE
Bread
Cakes
I'VE HEARD NOTHING NO MEN IN BLACK HAVE TURNED UP TO TAKE ME AWAY
AND NOW, WHEN I DREAM, IT IS OF THE VOICE OF A MAN ABOUT WHOM THE ONLY THING I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT HIS NAME ISN'T JOE AND OF HIS HUGE HANDS CLOSING AROUND MINE
HIS HANDS, THAT WRAPPED AROUND MINE AS SURELY AND FIRMLY AS THE FUTURE HOLDS TODAY

END



Chapter 7

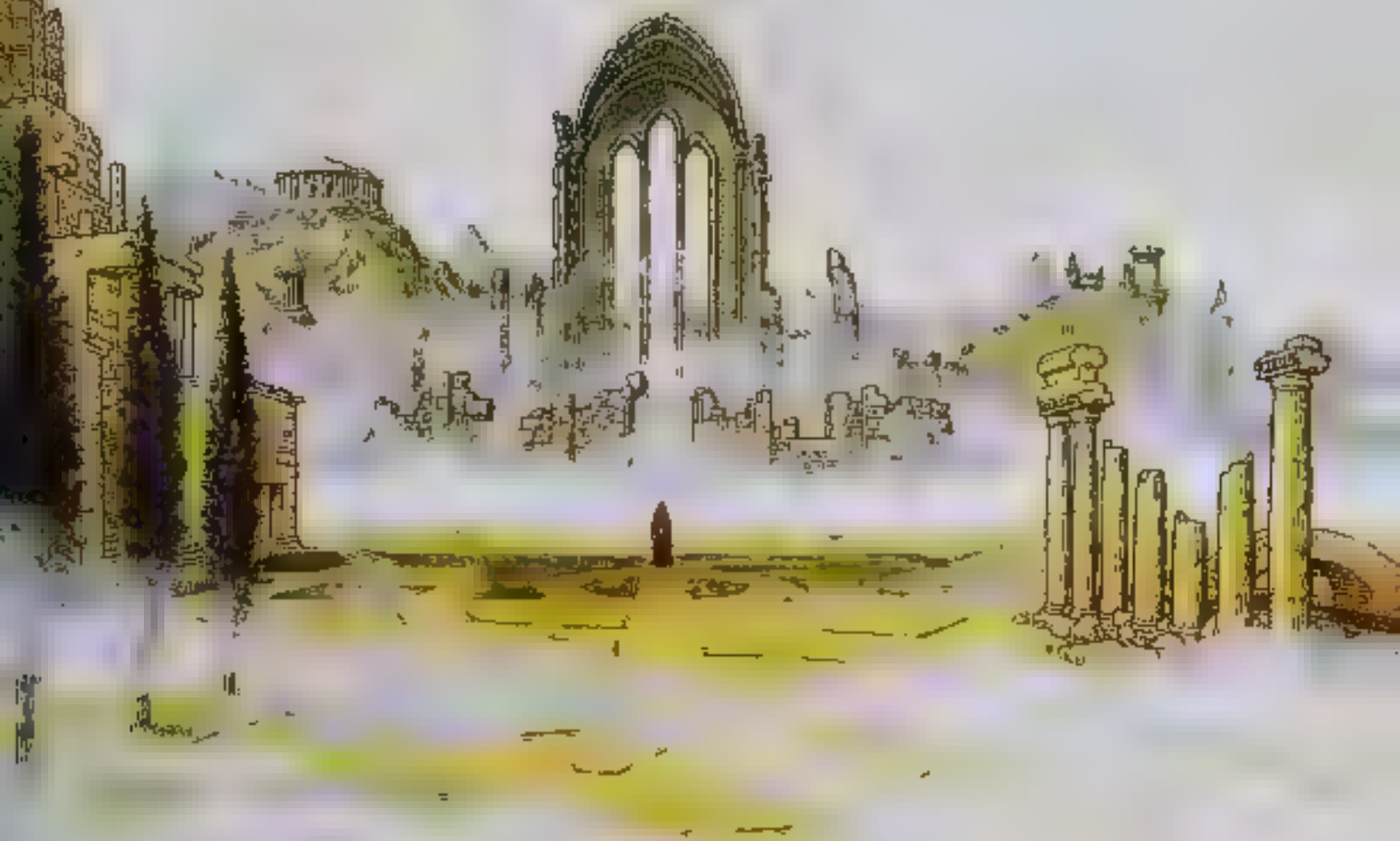
DESTINY

Endless Nights


Endless Nights
Frank Quitely

There is a man with a book,
walking through his garden

The man
is blind



The garden is a maze
of paths that divide
and branch and recombine.




There are statues in the garden. Huge statues. If they move, as some claim they do, it is too slowly to be easily perceived.
The book is heavy. You would not be able to lift it

Now his path takes him into his dwelling, a place of corridors and halls

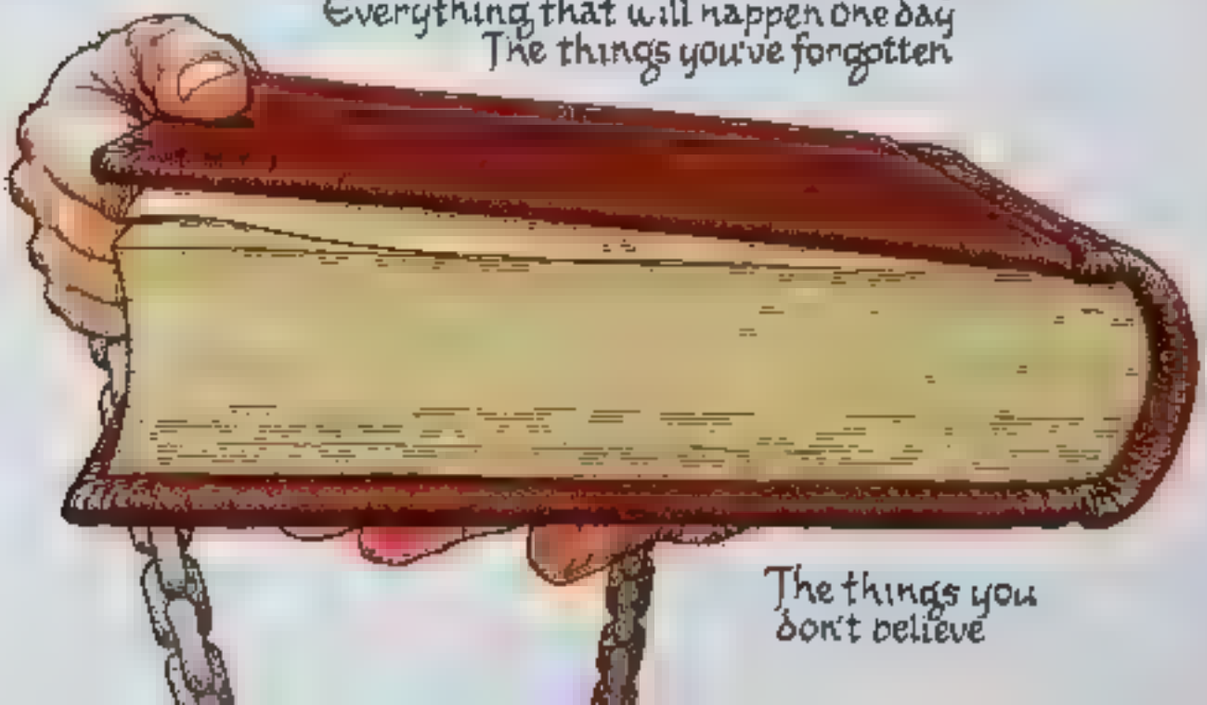
The paintings in Destiny's hall show his brothers and sisters as they might wish to be seen (although the wish and the thing are so close in the realm of the Endless that you cannot get a thin bladed knife between them)

You will spend time in the realm of each of his siblings— you will dream despair, desire, destroy delight and otherwise, and, eventually, die— but you were his from the very first page, and only he will read how your story comes out a long time from now.

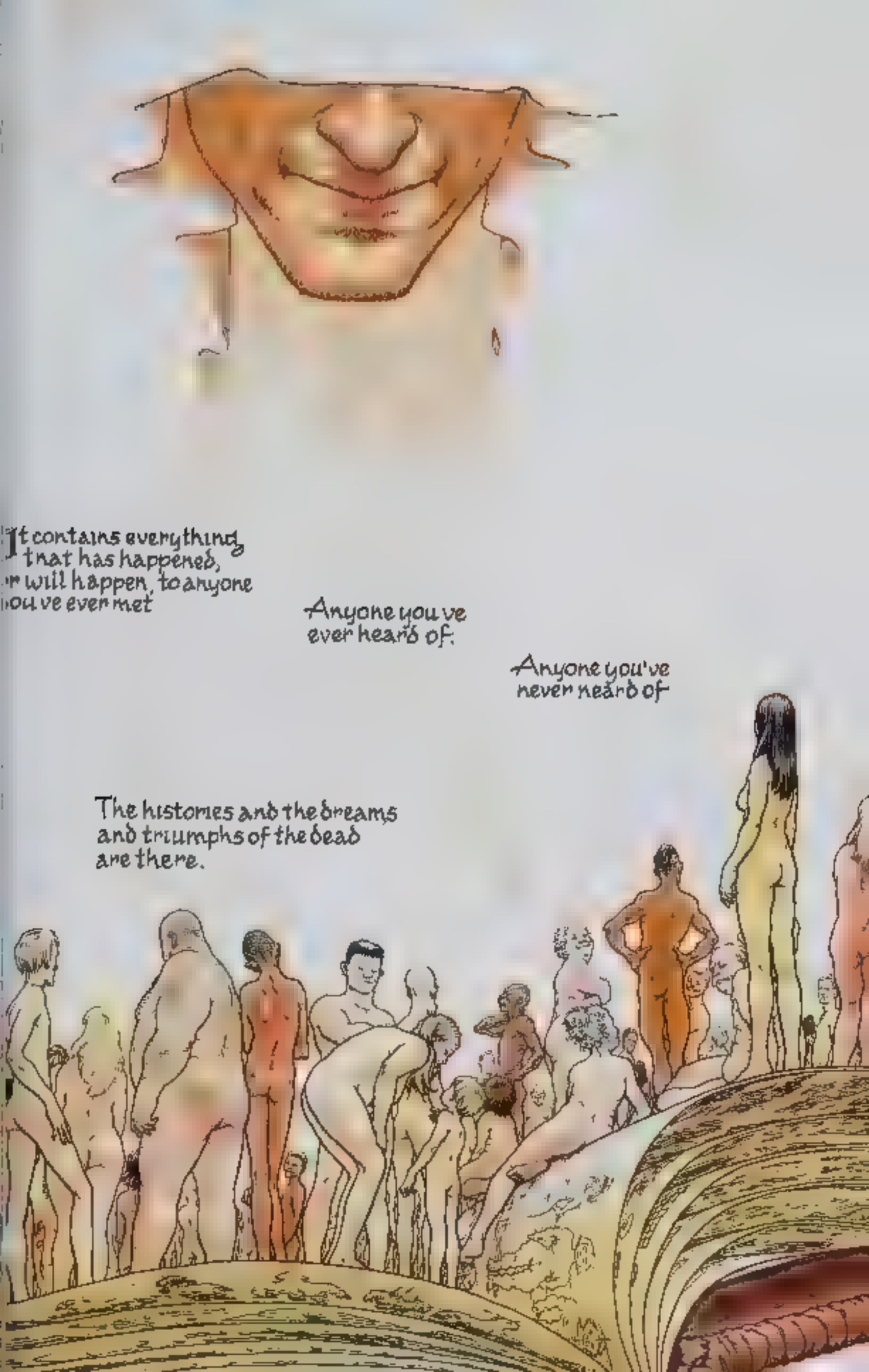
He is chained to the book or it is chained to him It is a book of many pages It cannot be stolen; he cannot give it away



It contains your life Every detail of your life Everything that has happened to you Everything that will happen one day The things you've forgotten



The things you don't believe

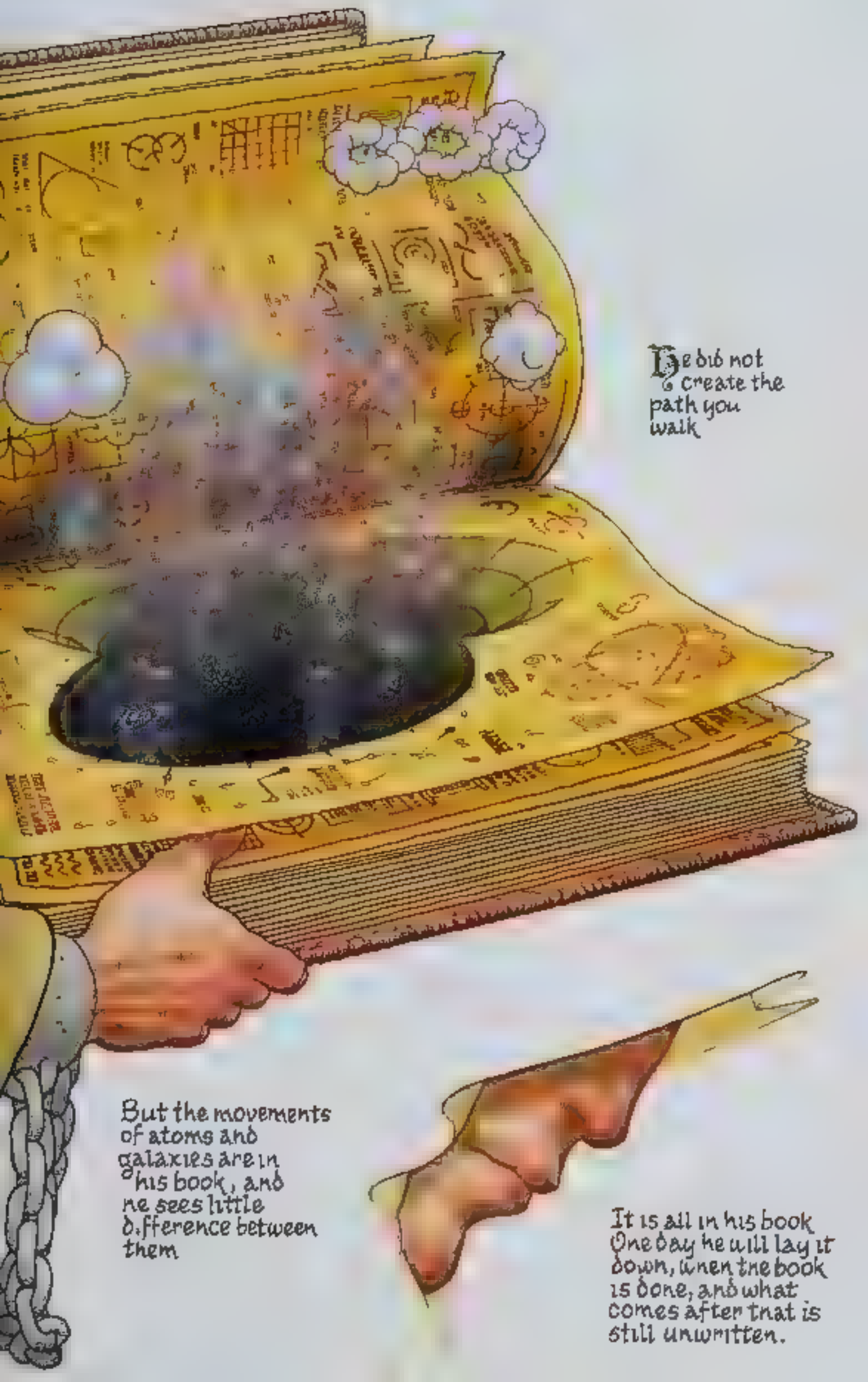

It contains everything that has happened, or will happen, to anyone you've ever met
Anyone you've ever heard of.
Anyone you've never heard of
The histories and the dreams and triumphs of the dead are there.



The meaning of the patterns of the spots of each leopard is written there, along with the truth of the shapes of clouds, and the strange, funny song-lives of the bacteria-folk and the secrets the wind whispers when there is no one there to listen.

Everything is in there, from the beginning of time to the end.




He did not create the path you walk
But the movements of atoms and galaxies are in his book, and he sees little difference between them
It is all in his book One day he will lay it down, when the book is done, and what comes after that is still unwritten.

A page turns.



Destiny continues to walk...

He is holding a book. Inside the book is the Universe.





Neil Gaiman

Neil Gaiman was born on the tenth of November 1960 in Porchester, England, which makes him, at the moment of writing this, 42 years old, a Scorpio and English. His novel American Gods won the Hugo, the Nebula, and the Bram Stoker Award. His most recent book was the children's novel Coraline, an international bestseller which has already won several awards. In 2002 he wrote and directed a short film called "A Short Film About John Bolton," and next week Dave McKean starts directing a feature film they conceived, and which Neil wrote, for the Jim Henson company, a partly-animated film called Mirror Mask.

His favorite things include eating good sushi, writing, and wondering. He still lives in a big, old house near Minneapolis.

He thinks the best graphic novel he ever wrote was MR. PUNCH.

He is listening to the Beatles' TITLE TK on a battered iPod as he types this, on the final plane home after being away. He always finds it slightly disturbing to talk about himself in the third person. He was keeping an online journal at www.neilgaiman.com long before keeping such things was fashionable. He dreams of weekends and horses.

biography



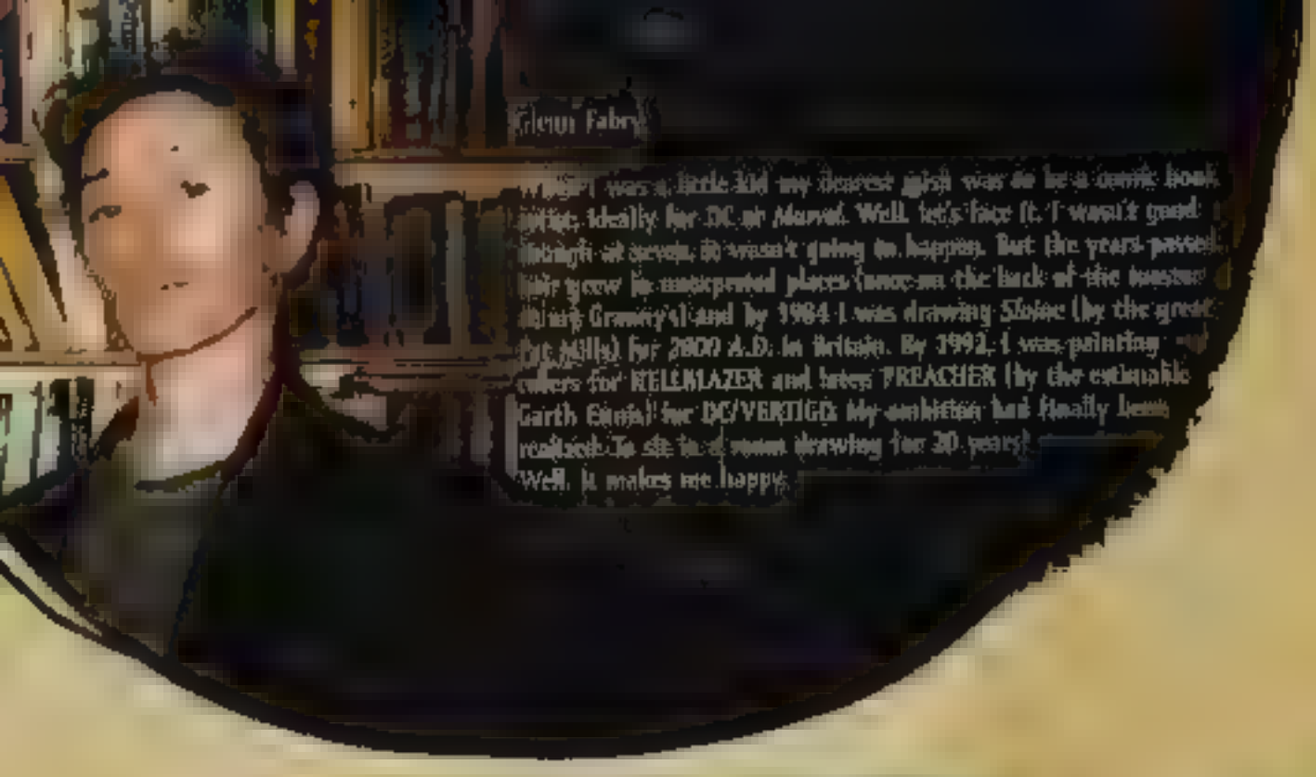
I had begun studying architecture but finally decided to leave it and engage in what I have always been passionate about: to paint and to write. I also create music, but 24 hours in a day was not enough time for everything, and I have left music. I started working in comics in the early eighties and I'm still painting. I illustrate books, collaborate in the press, do artistic direction for TV characters creation for the *Men in Black* cartoon series, and I engage myself in any project that looks appealing and is related to the world of image and storytelling.

For my work I use traditional means: pencils, pens, paintbrushes, paintings of every kind; but I have also been persuaded to use new technologies. I live in the country, I like to travel, to read, and to listen to music, to watch movies and to share good wine and good conversation with my friends.

And I wouldn't be able to live far from the sea for a long time.

Soon he became a master class artist and found critical acclaim even from the hard-to-please, cult-loved Italian readers still stunned by the graphic and narrative revolution of Metal Hurlant, the French magazine which featured Manara's contemporaries such as Moebius, Druillet and Arno. Manara made his debut drawing the epic Buddhist adventures of Lo Scimmiotto, written by Silverio Pisu. Struck by the style of Moebius, Manara experimented with his style and improved upon it for his next work, Alessio Barghesi Rivoluzionario. While the erotic charge and sexual irony of Manara's work have made him one of the world's premier illustrators, the overlooked qualities of his simple and attractive scenarios have made him an honest artistic reporter of his times. Through escapist literature and the erotic tale his books have gained international success and include such titles as Click, the playbills for Fellini's Intervista, and many political and satirical shorts and comic strips.

Winner of the NY Society of Illustrators Gold Medal in 1970, [illegible] taught at many universities, including the School of Visual Arts in New York City and Art Center College of Design. He's worked as a freelance illustrator for diverse clients from the United States Information Agency and NASA to Heavy Metal and Playboy Publishing. As an exhibiting artist, [illegible] has had many one-man shows in New York City and Washington, DC. Also [illegible] the prestigious Di San Francisco.



Glenn Fabry

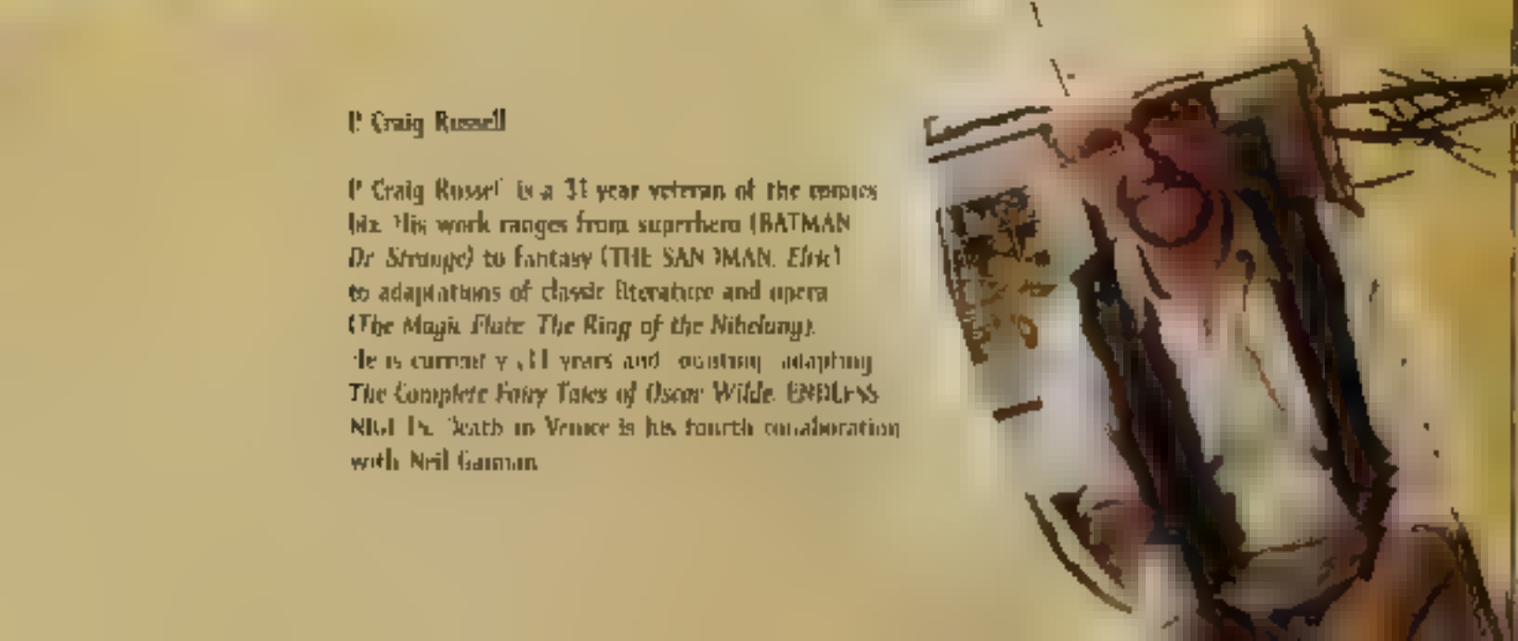
When I was a little kid my dearest wish was to be a comic book artist, ideally for DC or Marvel. Well, let's face it, I wasn't good enough at seven, so that's going to happen. But the years passed, hair grew in unexpected places (once on the back of the hand of Barry Crawley!) and by 1984 I was drawing Slaine (by the great Pat Mills) for 2000 A.D. in Britain. By 1992, I was painting cover for RELENTLESS and later PREACHER (by the estimable Garth Ennis!) for DC/VERTIGO. My ambition had finally been realised. To sit in a room drawing for 20 years!

Well, it makes me happy.



Todd Klein

Todd Klein has been lettering comics since 1977. A highlight of his career is his work with Neil Gaiman on nearly all the original issues of THE SANDMAN, as well as BLACK ORCHID, DEATH and THE BOOKS OF MAGIC. Currently he is teamed with Alan Moore on all the AMERICA'S BEST COMICS titles, Frank Miller on DK2, Linda Medley on *Castle Waiting* and Bill Willingham on FABLES, among others. Todd has won numerous Eisner and Harvey Awards for his work.



P Craig Russell

P Craig Russell is a 31 year veteran of the comics biz. His work ranges from superhero (BATMAN *Dr Strange*) to fantasy (THE SANDMAN, *Elric*) to adaptations of classic literature and opera (*The Magic Flute, The Ring of the Nibelung*). He is currently 11 years and counting adapting *The Complete Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde*. ENDLESS NIGHT, *Death in Venice* is his fourth collaboration with Neil Gaiman.



Frank Quitely

Frank Quitely was born in Glasgow in 1968. During the period 1988-2003 he's drawn *The Greens* (self-published), *Blackburn Missionary Man*, *Shmanna*, *Inuba*, Ten *Paradox Press* shorts, Six VERTIGO shorts, FLEX MENTALLO, 20/20 VISIONS, BATMAN: THE SCOTTISH CONNECTION, THE K.NIGHTM. OFFSPRING, J.A. PARTI 2 hardcover, THE INVISIBLES, TRANSMETROPOLITAN, THE AUTHORITY *Captain America*, *New X-Men* and now THE SANDMAN. He lives in Glasgow with his wife and two sons. He used to design his own hats and clothing. Currently, his favourite hobby is cooking. He's known to make a mean pesto.



Dave McKean

McKean has illustrated, several award-winning books including the best selling ARKHAM ASYLUM written by Grant Morrison), MR. PUNCH, *Signal To Noise* and *Violent Cases*, all written by Neil Gaiman, *Slow Chocolate Autopsy* (written by Iain Sinclair) and his own *Cages*. His collected short stories *Pictures that Stick* won the Victoria & Albert Museum Book of the Year Award, and his last short film *Mirrormask* won several first prize awards at the Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival.



He runs the jazz label *Fuel* with top sax player Iain Ballamy and has contributed production design to the second and third Harry Potter films. McKean lives in the Kent countryside in the UK.

The Sandman Library

Ten definitive graphic novels that reveal the story of Morpheus and the Endless, his uniquely dysfunctional family.

Preludes & Nocturnes

Dream of the Endless first appears in the Sandman that was lost for 75 years. To regain his imprisoned power, the Sandman must battle his way through Hell to retrieve his artifacts of power: his helmet, his pouch and his amulet.

The Doll's House

Rose Walker leads Dream and the Endless on a quest to solve the mystery of her family's connection to a serial killer known as Doctor Destiny and ultimately her true identity when The Sandman attempts to unravel her mystery.

Dream Country

Four chilling and exquisite tales, including stories of a Shakespearean fairy queen and a cat who loves The World's Greatest Magician, starring the Lord of Dreams and the Endless performing as William Shakespeare's plays, written by Charles Vess. Also contains Gaiman's original comic book script for Calliope.

Season of Mists

Ten thousand years ago, Dream of the Endless was the most powerful of the Seven. Now, he is summoned to Hell by Lucifer, who has abdicated his throne, leaving the Realm of Hell in the hands of the Sandman.

A Game of You

In the issues from The Doll's House, Dream's sister, Nada, is trapped in a prison of her own dreams, with strange animals as her companions. But Barbie has stepped through a doorway. Now her adventures entwine in a riveting story about gender and identity.

Fables & Reflections

From the mysterious origins of nightmares and the power of stories, to an encounter with Lucifer, Dream of the Endless, Lord of Ancient Mysteries, and his sister Desire, and brother Despair, explore the realms of Faerie, Hell, and the Dreaming, as well as the lives of mortals, others, and even himself, in this collection of short stories.

Brief Lives

Delirium's quest to find her brother, Dream, leads her to Hell, where she must bargain with her brother Destruction, but ultimately she must do what only she can do to save Dream, and restore his relationship with his son, Orpheus.

Worlds' End

Caught in the vortex of a reality storm, wayfarers from throughout time, myth and the imagination converge on a mysterious inn. In the tradition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, the travelers wait out the tempest that rages around them by sharing stories.

The Kindly Ones

Frightened people called them The Kindly Ones. Unstoppable in their mission of vengeance, they would not rest until the crime they sought to punish had been avenged: had been washed clean, with blood. Now Dream of the Endless, his acquaintances and his family find themselves caught up in a dark conspiracy. And someone is going to die.

The Wake

Ancient gods, old friends and enemies gather to pay tribute, and to remember, in the strangest wake ever held. And, at the end of his life, William Shakespeare fulfills his side of a very strange bargain.

Related Titles:

The Sandman: The Dream Hunters

Set in Japan, this adult fairytale, told in single illustration and prose, is beautifully painted by legendary artist Yoshitaka Amano.

Death: The High Cost of Living

One day every century, Death takes on mortal form to learn more about the lives she must take.

Death: The Time of Your Life

When a young mother makes a deal with Death to save her young son, her girlfriend pays the price in a story about fame, relationships and rock and roll.

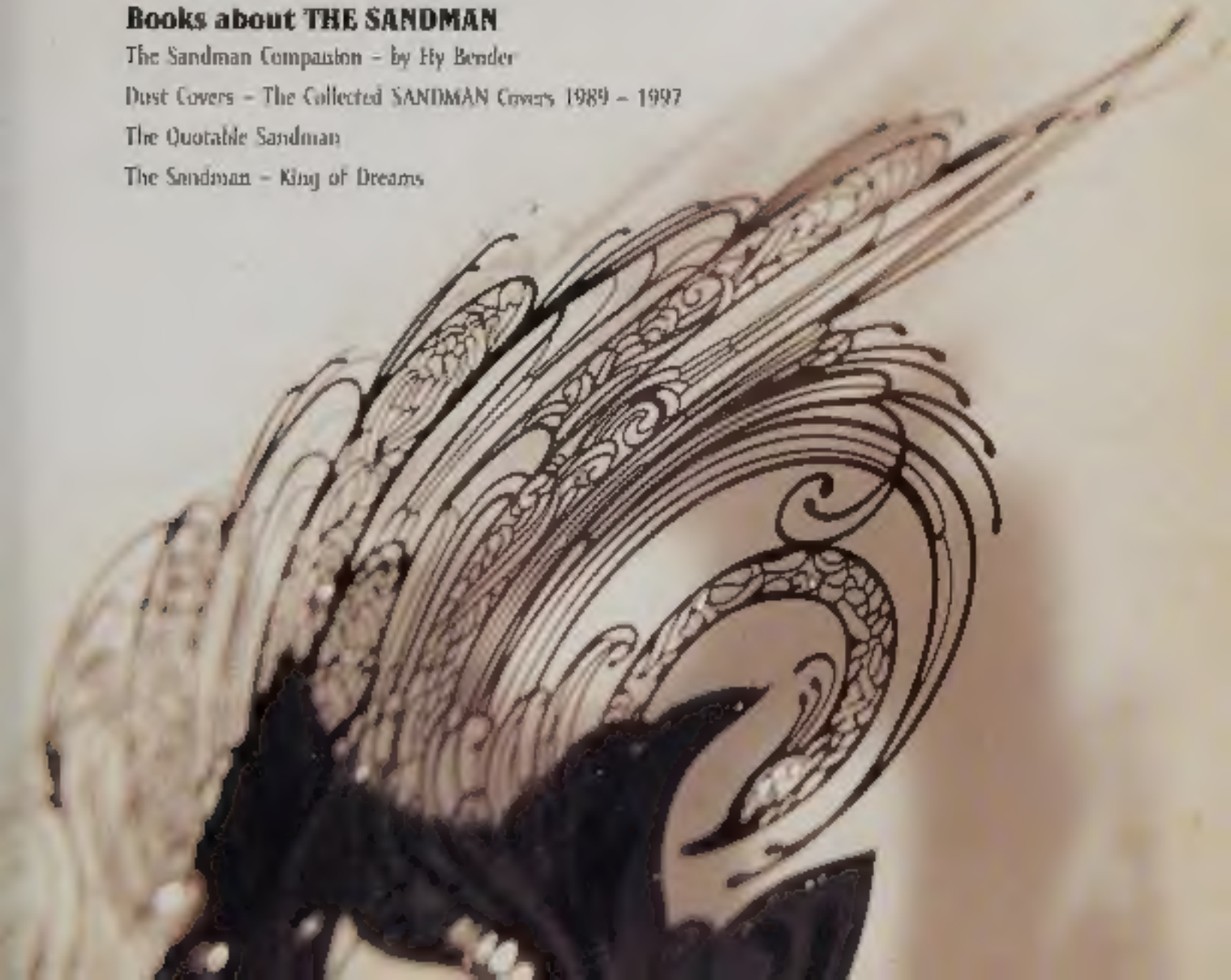
Books about THE SANDMAN

The Sandman Companion – by Hy Bender

Dust Covers – The Collected SANDMAN Covers 1989 – 1997

The Quotable Sandman

The Sandman – King of Dreams



Other great collections from Vertigo:

All Vertigo titles are Suggested for Mature Readers

NEIL GAIMAN AND CHARLES VESS STARDUST
Neil Gaiman/Charles Vess

NEIL GAIMAN'S MIDNIGHT DAYS
Neil Gaiman/various

BLACK ORCHID
Neil Gaiman/Dave McKean

MR. PUNCH
Neil Gaiman/Dave McKean

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC
Neil Gaiman/various

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: BINDINGS
John Ney Rieber/Gary Amaro/Peter Gross

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: SUMMONINGS
John Ney Rieber/various

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: RECKONINGS
John Ney Rieber/various

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: TRANSFORMATIONS
John Ney Rieber/Peter Gross

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: GIRL IN THE BOX
John Ney Rieber/Peter Gross/Peter Snejbjerg

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: THE BURNING GIRL
John Ney Rieber/Peter Gross/Peter Snejbjerg

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: DEATH AFTER DEATH
John Ney Rieber/various

THE BOOKS OF FAERIE
Brunwyn Carlton/John Ney Rieber/Peter Gross

THE BOOKS OF FAERIE: AUBERON'S TALE
Brunwyn Carlton/John Ney Rieber/various

THE NAMES OF MAGIC
Dylan Horrocks/Richard Case

DESTINY: A CHRONICLE OF DEATHS FORETOLD
Alisa Kwitney/various

THE LITTLE ENDLESS STORYBOOK
Jill Thompson

DEATH: AT DEATH'S DOOR
Jill Thompson

FABLES: LEGENDS IN EXILE
Bill Willingham/Lan Medina/
Steve Leialoha/Craig Hamilton

FABLES: ANIMAL FARM
Bill Willingham/Mark Buckingham/
Steve Leialoha

HEAVY LIQUID
Paul Pope

HELLBLAZER: ORIGINAL SINS
Jamie Delano/various

HELLBLAZER: DANGEROUS HABITS
Garth Ennis/various

HELLBLAZER: FEAR AND LOATHING
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

HELLBLAZER: TAINTED LOVE
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

HELLBLAZER: DAMNATION'S FLAME
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon/
William Simpson/Peter Snejbjerg

HELLBLAZER: HAUNTED
Warren Ellis/John Higgins

HELLBLAZER: HARD TIME
Brian Azzarello/Richard Corben

HELLBLAZER: GOOD INTENTIONS
Brian Azzarello/Marcelo Frusin

JONNY DOUBLE
Brian Azzarello/Eduardo Risso

LUCIFER: DEVIL IN THE GATEWAY
Mike Carey/Peter Gross/Chris Weston

LUCIFER: CHILDREN AND MONSTERS
Mike Carey/Peter Gross/Dean Ormston

LUCIFER: A DALLIANCE WITH
THE DAMNED
Mike Carey/Peter Gross/Dean Ormston

LUCIFER: THE DIVINE COMEDY
Mike Carey/Peter Gross/Dean Ormston

100 BULLETS: FIRST SHOT, LAST CALL
Brian Azzarello/Eduardo Risso

100 BULLETS: SPLIT SECOND CHANCE
Brian Azzarello/Eduardo Risso

100 BULLETS: HANG UP ON THE HANG LOW
Brian Azzarello/Eduardo Risso

100 BULLETS: A FOREGONE TOMORROW
Brian Azzarello/Eduardo Risso

100 BULLETS: THE COUNTERFIFTH DETECTIVE
Brian Azzarello/Eduardo Risso

PREACHER: GONE TO TEXAS
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

PREACHER: UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

PREACHER: PROUD AMERICANS
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

PREACHER: ANCIENT HISTORY
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon/various

PREACHER: DIXIE FRIED
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

PREACHER: WAR IN THE SUN
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon/Peter Snejbjerg

PREACHER: SALVATION
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

PREACHER: ALL HELL'S A-COMING
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon/John McCrea

PREACHER: ALAMO
Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon

PREACHER: DEAD OR ALIVE
(THE COLLECTED COVERS)
Glenn Fabry

SWAMP THING: DARK GENESIS
Len Wein/Bernie Wrightson

SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING
Alan Moore/Stephen Bissette/John Totleb

SWAMP THING: LOVE & DEATH
Alan Moore/Stephen Bissette/
John Totleben/Shawn McManus

SWAMP THING: THE CURSE
Alan Moore/Stephen Bissette/John Totleb

SWAMP THING: A MURDER OF CROWS
Alan Moore/various

SWAMP THING: EARTH TO EARTH
Alan Moore/John Totleben/
Rick Veitch/Alfredo Alcala

SWAMP THING: REUNION
Alan Moore/Rick Veitch/
Stephen Bissette/Alfredo Alcala/
John Totleben/Tom Yeates

TRANSMETROPOLITAN: BACK ON THE STR
Warren Ellis/Darick Robertson/various

TRANSMETROPOLITAN: LUST FOR LIFE
Warren Ellis/Darick Robertson/various

TRANSMETROPOLITAN: YEAR OF THE BASTA
Warren Ellis/Darick Robertson/
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Y: THE LAST MAN — UNMANNED
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"The first time ever an American comic-book pub[lished] [New York Times Bestseller] list." —*Variety*

"Gaiman takes us on a wild ride through a night [in the Endless's realm], from the pessimistic Despair to the gardens of Destiny, via a party at the beginning of the Universe and the islands off Venice. THE SANDMAN has always experimented with form, theme and illustration, and ENDLESS NIGHTS continues the tradition." —*The Guardian*

"The best comic book ever returns." —*Entertainment Weekly*

"What Gaiman has written is a comics masterpiece, a book that, in its seven tales, one devoted to each of the Endless, each illustrated by a different artist, demonstrates the enormous range of the comics medium both in content and style." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Endlessly entertaining." —*Boston Herald*

"Gaiman not only tells fresh tales of his beloved characters, but explores how each can affect human lives." —*The Independent*

"This is what comics are all about: Powerful strange stories enhanced by serious artwork." —*New York Post*

"...the dazzling artwork by an international collection of luminaries...qualifies the book as one of the year's most essential comics." —*Time Out New York*

"ENDLESS NIGHTS both delivers on the high expectations of longtime readers and surprises with its millennium-spanning variety." —*Village Voice*

"...everything his fans could have hoped for." —*Metro*

"If they have not done so already, now is the time for readers of Gaiman's novels to discover THE SANDMAN." —*The Guardian*

"SANDMAN just might be the smartest comic book ever written." —*USA Today*

"Gaiman's triumphant return to form." —*The Washington Post*



Before becoming a *New York Times* best-selling author with books like *American Gods* and *Coraline*, Neil Gaiman revolutionized the comic-book arena w[ith] THE SANDMAN. The most acclaimed and award-wi[nning] comics series of the last decade, the ten volumes o[f] THE SANDMAN are a rich blend of modern myth a[nd] fantasy in which contemporary fiction, historical d[rama] and legend are seamlessly interwoven.

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